KIMḤI ON THE PSALMS

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SERIES III

RABBINIC TEXTS

R. DAVID ḲIMḤI

ON THE

FIRST BOOK OF PSALMS

The Longer Commentary of R. David Ḳimḥi on the First Book of Psalms

(I-X, XV–XVII, XIX, XXII, XXIV)

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INTRODUCTION

Short Account of the Present Commentary.

THE translation that is given below contains extracts from the longer Commentary on the first Book of Psalms, written in Hebrew by the celebrated mediæval Jewish grammarian and exegete, Rabbi David Ḳimḥi (ReDaḲ), whose lifetime falls within the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (1160–1235 A.D.). Our translation is based upon the critical edition of the Hebrew text edited by Dr. Schiller-Szinessy and published at Cambridge in 1883.[1]

Ḳimḥi is important both as a grammarian and exegete. His exegesis, which owes much to predecessors, especially to Abraham ibn Ezra (1092–1167 A.D.), is remarkable for its clearness and sobriety, and its adherence to the plain and literal sense of the Scriptural text. Ḳimḥi was a well-trained philologist for his time, and was an exact grammarian. Though he notices the old Midrashic interpretations in his commentary, he always sets exact and literal exegesis in the forefront.

His work has exercised profound influence on later generations, not only of Jews, but of Christians. His commentary on the Prophets, as well as those on Genesis and the Psalms, are accessible in the Rabbinical Bibles, and have also been printed in separate editions. Latin translations of the more important parts of Ḳimḥi's work were also made for Christian use. The Rabbi's influence on Christian circles is reflected in the English Bible, especially in the Authorised Version (AV) of 1611, where, it has been said, it can be traced "on every page."

The specimens of Ḳimḥi's exegesis given below will afford the student a very fair idea of the author's methods as a grammarian and

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[1] *The First Book of the Psalms according to the text of the Cambridge MS. Bible Add.* 465, *with the longer Commentary of R. David Qimchi critically edited from nineteen manuscripts and the early editions* by S. M. Schiller-Szinessy, M.A., Ph.D. (Cambridge, 1883).

exegete. It may be added that Ḳimḥi writes excellent Hebrew, pure, without being pedantic, in style, elastic in structure, and exact in grammar.[2]

The Development of Bible Exegesis among the Jews (down to the Era of Maimonides).

In order to be able to understand Ḳimḥi's place in the long line of exegetical study, something must be said about the development of Biblical exegesis which had taken place before his time. The formation of a carefully defined canon of Scripture, embodied in the Hebrew Old Testament, marks a definite stage in an immense process of development. The study of the Bible, together with the various allied studies to which it gave birth, was focussed in the Rabbinical schools, and through the Synagogue profoundly influenced the masses of the Jewish people. The products of this manifold activity can be seen in the vast Talmudic and Midrashic literature.

The earliest form of Scriptural exegesis is the *Midrashic*. The primary meaning of *Midrash* is "investigation,"[3] and, as applied to the text of Scripture, it came to denote the process by which new meanings and applications could be deduced, as opposed to the bare literal sense, which was technically termed "Peshaṭ" (="simple"). "Midrashic elements can already be detected in the text of Scripture itself. The Chronicler cites as one of his sources a 'Midrash' [E.V. 'commentary'] of the Book of Kings (2 Chron. xxiv. 27), and the Books of Chronicles exhibit many of the characteristic features of Midrash proper, as can be seen by comparing the parallel narratives contained in Chronicles and those of the earlier historical books (Samuel and Kings). In the work of the Chronicler we have to deal 'with a very free treatment and exposition of old traditional material, the object of which is not so much to narrate history as to conduce to religious edification.'"[4] It was at a later period, however, that the Midrashic development reached its fullest extent, and resulted in the production of a vast literature of a special kind. When this literature begins to develop in an independent form it came naturally to be divided into two groups, the Halakic and the Haggadic. The Halakic, which

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[2] Till the appearance of a translation by Dr. A. W. Greenup of Pss. i.–viii. in 1918, no part of Ḳimḥi's work on the Psalms had been rendered into English, so far as we are aware, apart from two instalments of the present work which appeared in *Church and Synagogue* in October 1912 and February 1913.

[3] From the root דרשׁ, "to seek out," "investigate."

[4] Cornill, as cited in *RWS*[2], p. 79.

embraced the earliest examples (the *Mekilta*, *Sifra*, and *Sifre*),[5] was mainly concerned with the deduction of legal rules and precedents from the exegesis of the legal parts of the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy). On the other hand, the Haggadic[6] Midrashim, which embrace the vast mass of the Midrashic literature, treat the text of Scripture in a freer and more edifying manner, and use parables, stories, and illustrations drawn from all sources to illustrate the themes. Most of the Books of the Old Testament have received Midrashic treatment of this kind, and this material has been compiled into special collections. Thus there is a special Midrash for each of the Books of the Pentateuch (apart from the Halakic collections mentioned above) and for the five Megilloth (Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ḳoheleth [=Ecclesiastes], and Esther). This collection, embracing ten books, is known as the *Midrash rabbah*, these books being those which occupied the chief place in the lectionary of the Synagogue. But, as has been said, other Biblical books received similar treatment; thus the Book of Psalms has a Midrash of its own, which is cited from its opening words as *Shoḥer Ṭôb*, and is constantly referred to by Ḳimḥi in his commentary.

This whole literature embodies an immense wealth of exegetical material, largely of a traditional character, which had grown up in the course of centuries. It should be added that the Haggadic collections are mainly of Palestinian origin. It was in the Palestinian schools that the Haggadah was principally cultivated. It is true that the Babylonian Talmud, which reflects the activities of the Babylonian schools, contains a large Haggadic element. But the main preoccupation of the Babylonians was with the Halakah.[7] In connexion with the development of the Halakic exegesis an important place must be assigned to the elder Hillel (30 B.C.), who formulated the seven rules associated with his name which were applied to the explanation of the Biblical text, and by which apparent contradictions could be resolved, the range of a Biblical enactment amplified or curtailed, and new halakoth deduced. These rules, which have played an enormously important part in Rabbinical exegesis, were afterwards amplified by R. Ishmael (second century A.D.) into thirteen. This eminent Halakist maintained the view, which was to have an important influence on later Jewish exegesis, that the language of

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[5] For details, *cf.* *RWS*², pp. 81 f. "Halakah" = "rule," and is applied to laws which are of binding obligation.

[6] "Haggadah" = "narration," "telling"; see *RWS*², p. 78.

[7] "In Babylonia the Haggadic exegesis was cultivated in a less independent spirit, being mostly under the influence of the Palestinian schools. There were, however, eminent Haggadists among the great teachers, as Rab in the third and Raba in the fourth century" (*JE*, iii. 164, *s.v.* *Bible exegesis*).

Scripture is to be interpreted by the standards of human speech, and not to be unduly and artificially pressed. On the other hand, his contemporary R. Akiba emphasised the incomparable importance of every detail, even the minutest, of the sacred text. Nothing was to be regarded as insignificant or without special meaning ; and hence everything in the text was to become the subject of interpretation Akiba successfully founded a school of exegesis based on these principles, which was influential in the post-Hadrianic epoch. One of his pupils, Eliezer, the son of the Galilean Rabbi Jose, formulated thirty-two rules for Haggadic exegesis.

A further point to be noted is that during the period of the Palestinian Amoraim (*c.* 220–370 A.D.) the tendency asserted itself to organise Halakists and Haggadists into sharply distinguished schools. The most important of the Bible exegetes were usually professional Haggadists,[8] such as were Samuel b. Nahman and Tanhuma. It was these men who preserved the old exegetic tradition, and made the later collections of Haggadic literature possible. The earlier phases of the exegetical tradition can best be seen, perhaps, in the old Bible translations, and especially in the LXX. This element in the Greek Bible has not even yet been fully explored. A comprehensive study of this problem would also take into account the exegetical data that are contained in the work of Philo and Josephus, and, in particular, the evidence of the New Testament citations of the Old Testament Scriptures, which often reflect the current exegesis (modified later) of the ancient Synagogue.

The type of Biblical exegesis that was dominant down to the Talmudic period may be best described as Midrashic. It was Haggadic in character, dealing with the text of the Bible with great freedom, and often interpreting it in a way that seems remote from the simple and natural meaning of the original words. Not that the plain and strict meaning of the text is always ignored. The "Peshaṭ," as it is termed[9]—*i.e.* the literal meaning of the text—is often referred to and discussed, and in many cases with fine insight and sound linguistic knowledge. But this is entirely overbalanced by the mass of Haggadic exposition. "In the Halakic as well as in the Haggadic exegesis the expounder endeavoured not so much to seek the original meaning of the text as to find authority in some Bible passage for the concepts and ideas, the rules of conduct and teachings, for which he wished to have a Biblical foundation. To this were added, on the one hand, the belief that the words of the Bible had many meanings,

[8] בעלי אגדה.

[9] It should be noticed that the "Peshaṭ" is carefully and deliberately distinguished from the "Derash" (דרש), *i.e.* the free Haggadic (Midrashic) exposition, especially by the Babylonian teachers.

and, on the other, the importance attached to the smallest portion, the slightest peculiarity of the text: hence the exegesis of the Midrash strayed further and further away from a natural and common-sense interpretation." [10]

It must also be remembered that the Midrash is essentially homiletical in tendency. It aims at religious edification rather than scientific investigation of the meaning of the text. As such it was necessarily one-sided, and sooner or later a reaction was bound to set in against its almost exclusive predominance. The elements for this already existed in the distinction drawn between the "Peshaṭ" and the "Derash," and also in the attitude of opposition taken up by R. Ishmael and his followers against the school of Akiba. It will be remembered that Ishmael insisted that the language of Scripture is to be interpreted naturally, in accordance with the standards that apply to human speech, and ought not to be pressed unduly and artificially in detail. Ishmael is even reported to have exclaimed once, in rejecting an exposition of Eliezer ben Hyrkanos: "Truly you say to Scripture: Be silent, while I am expounding!" [11] It was the Babylonian Amoraim who first used the expression "Peshaṭ" to designate the primary sense in contradistinction to "Derash," the Midrashic exegesis. It was in Babylonia, also, that the important principle was laid down that the Haggadic exegesis could not annul the primary sense. These distinctions were later destined to exercise a determining influence in the development of Jewish exegesis. Another factor that helped to prepare the way for a closer and more literal exposition of the Biblical text was the labours of the Masoretic scholars. Though great care had always been lavished on preserving a correct Hebrew text of the Old Testament Scriptures by the scribes, this branch of learning received a great impetus in the seventh century, when vowel-signs were introduced. Henceforward Masoretic studies steadily developed, and the body of Masoretic tradition—all concerned with the exact determination and preservation of the Biblical text—steadily grew for centuries.[12] Such activities must obviously have contributed largely to the more exact exegesis of the Bible which gradually grew up. Perhaps the most important part in bringing this about must be assigned to the Karaites—themselves keen grammarians and textual scholars—who boldly challenged the claims of the current exegetical tradition, and indeed the authority of Rabbinical tradition generally, and insisted that the sole fount of authority for the religious life was to be found in the plain text of Scripture. Founded in the eighth century by Anan, this sect, which has lasted to the present day, has remained only a comparatively small and heretical branch of Judaism;

[10] *JE*, *ibid.* [11] Cited from the *Sifra* on Lev. xiii. 49 in *JE*, *ibid.*
[12] The Masora was printed for the first time in 1425.

but it has, by reaction, exercised a permanent influence on the development of exegesis in the main body of orthodox Judaism. A century and a half after the rise of the sect the great Jewish exegete, Saadya (892–942), inaugurated a new epoch—"the period of the Peshaṭ"—in the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Engaged in controversy with the Karaites, he was yet profoundly influenced by them. A great scholar, and the creator of Hebrew philology, Saadya also occupied the most authoritative position of his time in Jewry, as the Gaon of Sura, and was able, in virtue of his unique opportunities as well as of his own great personal qualifications, to bring the large majority of orthodox Jews, who still held to tradition, into new paths in the matter of Bible study. Saadya, in fact, put Jewish Biblical exegesis on a new line of development. His most important work, the Arabic translation of the Scriptures, aims at giving, not a bare reproduction of the original text, but a rational exegesis embodied in a free translation. He wrote a number of other important works, some of which have come down to us only in fragmentary form. The principles which he applied to the interpretation of the Bible, and which exercised a profound influence on the later exegesis, may be summarised as follows :

(1) His fundamental postulate is that reason is the true basis of all exegesis, and in accordance with this principle "the exposition of the text must contain nothing that is obscure or that contradicts logical thought." He does not deny the divine origin or the divine authority of the Bible ; and the miracles, he thinks, serve as witnesses to the veracity of the Prophets and of Scripture generally. At the same time, these postulates are not irreconcilable with the claims of reason ; anthropomorphic language about God is regarded as figurative.

(2) Besides the authority of reason, the collateral authority of the Scriptures themselves is recognised as a source of sound exegesis (parallel passages and illustrative texts).

(3) He also recognises, to some extent, the authority of tradition, in his Bible exegesis, so far as this is compatible with the paramount claims of a rational exegesis.

The last of the Geonim Hai (died 1038), who was a great Talmudist, and the author of a famous Lexicon, also devoted himself to Bible exegesis (he wrote a commentary on Job). He is cited by Kimḥi in his commentary. But Saadya's true successors, both in philological and exegetical study, are to be found in the great Jewish schools of North Africa and Spain. Kairwan in North Tunis became one of these centres, and was already growing in importance even during Saadya's lifetime. It was here that Dunash ibn Tamim[13] (tenth cen-

[13] Not to be confounded with Dunash ben Labrat (also born in North Africa), for whom see note on Ps. ix. 1. Ben Labrat was a younger contemporary of Dunash ibn Tamim.

tury) was one of the pioneers of the comparative study of Hebrew and Arabic as an aid to Biblical exegesis. Another North African, earlier still, Judah ibn Koreish, had compiled a work in which Arabic, Aramaic, and neo-Hebrew are systematically compared with Biblical Hebrew. Judah also recommended, in this connexion, the study of the Targum (Aramaic). It was, however, in the Spanish schools, where Hebrew philology was most fruitfully studied and developed from the middle of the tenth to the beginning of the twelfth century, that the foundations of the later mediæval exegesis were laid. "From the time of Ḥasdai ibn Shaprut to that of Samuel ibn Nagdela (second half of the tenth to the first half of the eleventh century) eminent and gifted scholars vied with one another in placing the science of Hebrew grammar on a firm basis—a basis that has not been overthrown even by the philology of the nineteenth century. They also developed Hebrew lexicography to a point far in advance of all preceding endeavours. Menahem ben Saruk's dictionary; Dunash ibn Labrat's critical work; Judah ben David Ḥayyuj's work, that came like a revelation; Abulwalid's critical work; the literary controversy between him and Samuel ibn Nagdela; and the writings of both as well as of others belonging to their circle; and, finally, Abulwalid's chief work, composed of a grammatical and lexical part—all these works mark the development of the philologic literature in Spain. Those of Ḥayyuj and Abulwalid especially furnished a firm basis for a Bible exegesis that, on its linguistic side at least, was free from gross errors and mere guesswork."[14] Abulwalid's great work, which is a combination of a grammar and a lexicon, is especially rich in exegetic material.[15] It should be added that these scholars, though of course they knew Hebrew, used as their ordinary medium the Arabic language.

Two eminent philologists of the Spanish-Jewish school who directed their attention to Biblical exegesis proper were Moses ibn Giḳtilla,[16] of Cordova, and Judah ibn Balaam, of Toledo (both flourished in the eleventh century). The former wrote commentaries on Isaiah and the Psalms, from which Ibn Ezra frequently quotes. These commentaries are the first comprehensive attempt to explain the respective Biblical books historically. Ibn Giḳtilla's exegesis is thoroughly rationalistic (*e.g.* he gives rationalistic explanations of the Biblical

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[14] *JE*, *ibid.* 167.

[15] Abulwalid ibn Ganah (Rabbi Jonah) was the greatest Hebrew philologist of the Middle Ages. The work of his referred to above is divided into two parts—the Luma and Book of Roots. The latter has been edited, in the Arabic text, by Dr. Neubauer (Oxford, 1875). Abulwalid was born at Cordova between the years 1085 and 1090, and died at Saragossa in the first half of the eleventh century.

[16] *cf.* note 7 on Ps. viii. below.

miracles), and was violently attacked by Ibn Balaam. Both wrote in Arabic.[17]

But the Spanish-Jewish schools also brought forth new elements which were destined to influence Biblical exegesis. These were associated with the development of poetry and the philosophy of religion. In this connexion two famous names may be mentioned, representatives both of poetry and the philosophy of religion, Solomon ibn Gebirol (1021–58), an influential teacher of Neoplatonism in Europe, and Moses ibn Ezra (1070–1138). In order to reconcile the Biblical statements with the postulates of philosophy, the text was treated with considerable freedom. Allegory was also used to some extent. "In consequence the elements of a new form of Midrash found their way into Bible exegesis, made subservient to philosophic speculation. The Peshaṭ exegesis, which had been freed from the fetters of the early Midrash, contained in the traditional literature, found itself now confronted by a new enemy—the philosophic Midrash."[18] Meanwhile, in those countries which lay outside the domain of the Arabic culture, *i.e.* the Christian countries of Europe, especially France and Italy, the old Midrashic exegesis remained paramount, and continued to develop along its own lines. Its schools produced some famous exponents of this type of exegesis, called "Darshanim," and notably Moses ha-Darshan (flourished in Narbonne middle of the eleventh century). It also came to expression in the *Yalḳut Shimeoni*, a vast Midrashic compilation (often from older sources) embracing the entire text of the Hebrew Bible, and dating perhaps from the middle of the thirteenth century. Strangely enough, however, it was in this field (Northern France) that there arose, in complete independence of the Spanish-Arabian school, a new school of Bible exegesis, which endeavoured to arrive at a literal and simple interpretation of the Bible text—the Peshaṭ—and deliberately set this in contrast with the Midrashic exegesis. The founder of this school was the famous Rabbi Solomon Yiṣḥaki (Solomon ben Isaac), commonly called Rashi (died 1105). The value of Rashi's work is well known to all students of the later Hebrew literature. His commentary on the Talmud is

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[17] Ibn Giḳtilla's work is important because he was the first exegete to give purely historical explanations of the prophecies of Isaiah and the minor Prophets. He wrote several important works on grammar and philology; and occasionally wrote in Hebrew. Ḳimḥi several times quotes from Ibn Giḳtilla in the Psalms commentary (*cf.* on viii. 3, xvi. 2, xxv. 1, xxxv. 20).

[18] *JE, ibid.* 168. Abraham ibn Ezra gives several specimens of Ibn Gebirol's philosophico-allegorical Bible interpretation. Ḳimḥi also cites him occasionally. His work, *Fons Vitæ*, which expounds Neoplatonic doctrines, was studied by Duns Scotus.

indispensable, and is practically always printed with the text in printed editions. But his Biblical commentaries also occupy an almost unique position in Jewish exegetical literature, especially his running commentary on the Pentateuch. This work, which soon acquired the widest popularity, has a peculiarly Jewish flavour about it which marks it out among similar works. There are no graces of style, but the comments are terse and to the point. Not a word is wasted. It also combines in a remarkable manner the new with the old. The author uses the old Midrashic exegesis by a process of selection in such a way as to evolve explanations which conform to the Peshaṭ. The more fanciful and far-fetched Midrashic applications are rejected. In addition, he pays constant attention to the linguistic side of the exegesis, and often gives the vernacular French equivalents of the Hebrew words. "There is," says Dr. I. Abrahams, speaking of Rashi's Pentateuch commentary, "a quaintness and fascination about it which are lacking in the pedantic sobriety of [Abraham] ibn Ezra and the grammatical exactness of Ḳimḥi."[19] Rashi's work was continued by his sons-in-law, and by his distinguished grandson, Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam, 1100–60), whose commentary on the Pentateuch may be regarded as, perhaps, marking the highest point reached by the exegetic school of Northern France. In his work and that of Joseph Ḳara the Peshaṭ was adopted in a more thoroughgoing and independent way than in that of Rashi himself.

The schools of Northern France died away in the early part of the twelfth century, owing to the tumults brought about by the Crusades. Jewish exegesis, however, in the Christian countries of Europe was destined to receive a new and fruitful impulse from a Jew who had absorbed the whole culture of Spanish Judaism at the highest point of its intellectual development. This was Abraham ibn Ezra, who was born at Toledo some time before 1100. Ibn Ezra left his home, a mature man, in 1140, and spent nearly thirty years (1140–67) in wandering over Italy, Provence, Northern France, and England, everywhere, as he himself says, "writing books and revealing the secrets of knowledge." In 1158 he visited London. His scholarship and literary activity were many-sided and astonishing. He was distinguished as a mathematician, a poet, and an exegete. His commentaries, written in Hebrew, are the most important products of his literary activity. They are distinguished in many ways—by the author's mastery over his material, by their attractive style and graceful Hebrew, and by their originality combined with profound learning and critical acumen. His Pentateuch commentary, side by side with Rashi's, has enjoyed great popularity among Jewish exegetical works. His own exegetical method is most clearly expounded in

[19] *Short History of Jewish Literature*, p. 73.

the preface to his commentary on the Pentateuch, where he criticises the various methods hitherto employed by exegetes. He clearly distinguishes between the Peshaṭ and Derash, and accords only a limited place to the new philosophical Midrash.

Dr. I. Abrahams well sums up his method as follows: "In his commentaries he rejected the current digressive and allegorical methods, and steered a middle course between free research on the one hand and blind adherence to tradition on the other. Ibn Ezra was the first to maintain that the Book of Isaiah contains the work of two prophets—a view now almost universal. He never for a moment doubted, however, that the Bible was in every part inspired, and in every part the word of God."[20] The Ḳimḥis were worthy coadjutors in, and continuators of, his work.

One other name must be mentioned before we reach the period of David Ḳimḥi, that of Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides), who is by common consent to be regarded as "the greatest Jew of the Middle Ages." Maimonides (1135–1204) was an older contemporary of David Ḳimḥi (1160–1235), and is constantly quoted by the latter in his commentaries.[21] Born at Cordova, and, like Ibn Ezra, inheriting the culture of Spanish Jewry, Maimonides also helped to disseminate this culture in other lands. Forced to leave Spain, owing to Mohammedan persecution, he emigrated with his family in 1165 to Palestine, and after a time settled in Egypt, in Fostat, or old Cairo, where he ultimately died.

Maimonides wrote both in Hebrew and Arabic. Though he contributed no set commentary on any Biblical Book, his chief philosophical work, composed in Arabic and subsequently translated into Hebrew by R. Samuel ibn Tibbon, and known as "The Guide of the Perplexed" (Hebrew, *Moreh Nebukim*),[22] contains a wealth of exegetic material. It is frequently quoted by Ḳimḥi in his commentaries.

His fundamental aim in this work is to reconcile the postulates of philosophy, based on the Aristotelian system as expounded by Arabian thinkers, with the data of the Bible. He recognises an exoteric and esoteric sense in the words of Scripture. "The 'secrets of the Law' hidden in the Biblical words are found by investigation into the esoteric meaning. But such secrets, as sought by Maimonides, have nothing to do with mysticism; he undertakes the investigation with absolute rationalism, as may be seen particularly in his explanation of certain Bible stories and his exposition of the reasons for the Law.

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[20] *op. cit.* p. 69.

[21] Maimonides was, of course, a younger contemporary of Ibn Ezra.

[22] Two translations of the "Guide" into Hebrew were made during Maimonides' own lifetime. The original was written about 1190. It was studied both by Mohammedans and Christians (*e.g.* Aquinas).

He finds the teachings of the Aristotelian physics and metaphysics in the chapters on Creation (Gen. i.), and in that of the Heavenly Chariot (Ezek. i.). His rationalism, however, halts at the facts of prophecy and of the Bible miracles, though here, too, rational investigation comes into play. One of the most original and daring aids to exegesis is evolved by the doctrine concerning prophecy—namely, the theory of visions—whereby he transfers a number of Bible stories from the realm of fact into the realm of psychic experience. The principle of the exoteric and esoteric sense of Scripture leads him to allegorical exegesis . . . but his allegory remains within the bounds prescribed to it by his rationalism on the one hand, and by his faith in tradition on the other."[23]

It was through the influence of this great work of Maimonides that the Aristotelian philosophy became firmly entrenched in Jewish thought, and also a chief factor in subsequent Bible exegesis.

The Author and his Work.

The family of Ḳimḥi to which our commentator belonged played a distinguished part in the diffusion of the new learning in European Jewry during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The father of David was Joseph Ḳimḥi (RIḲaM), who, as grammarian, exegete, poet, and translator, took an active share in the work in which Ibn Ezra was engaged, was a contemporary of the latter, his lifetime falling within the years 1105–70, and, like Ibn Ezra, was also of Spanish birth and knew Arabic. Owing to Arab fanaticism he was forced to leave Spain, and emigrated to Narbonne, Provence, where he seems to have remained for the rest of his days, living the life of a poor scholar-student and teacher. It is probable that Ibn Ezra, who visited Narbonne in 1160, met Joseph Ḳimḥi. He quotes the latter in his Bible commentaries. Both scholars worked along the same lines, and though Joseph Ḳimḥi was inferior to Ibn Ezra both in brilliance and learning, it may yet be claimed for him that he was "the first successful transplanter of Judæo-Arabic science to the soil of Christian Europe."[24]

In the department of grammatical study, though not profoundly original—he was especially dependent upon Ḥayyuj and Ibn Ganaḥ—

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[23] *JE*, *ibid.* 170. "Maimonides," says Dr. I. Abrahams (*op. cit.* p. 84), "like Saadya, recognised a higher function for reason. He placed reason on the same level as revelation, and then demonstrated that his faith and his reason taught identical truths."

[24] *cf.* Grätz (*History of the Jews*, iii. 404): "Joseph Ḳimḥi's merit consists solely in the fact that he introduced the Jewish culture of Spain into South France, and completed lastingly the results of Ibn Ezra's fugitive activity."

he did some important work and made some advance, especially in minor details. These books have been published: *Sefer Zikkaron* (ed. by Bacher, Berlin, 1888) and *Sefer ha-Galuy* (ed. by Matthews, Berlin, 1887). These works contain interesting features. Thus, the author makes a point of examining the language of the liturgy, and in his philological discussions adduces evidence from the Talmud, Targums, and Arabic. He also wrote a number of exegetical works, not all of which have survived, while some of his work which exists in manuscript is still unpublished. Of his published work, mention may here be made of his commentary on Proverbs, *Sefer Ḥukkah* (Breslau, 1868). He usually follows the method of the Peshaṭ, and in his exposition pays careful attention to the context. He quotes from and criticises predecessors; he avoids reading into the text of Scripture the scientific knowledge of his time. We must here pass over the important work he accomplished as translator and poet.[25]

Joseph Ḳimḥi died, as has been said, about 1170, leaving a younger son, David, who was then a boy of about ten years of age, under the care of an elder son, Moses Ḳimḥi (ReMaḲ), who at this time was probably a mature man,[26] and was a scholar and commentator of mark. Commentaries of his on Proverbs and Ezra–Nehemiah are printed in the Rabbinical Bibles, where they are wrongly attributed to Ibn Ezra. He also wrote treatises on grammar, and one of these (the *Mahalak*) became widely used as a concise, methodical text-book of Hebrew grammar, and in the first half of the sixteenth century was a favourite text-book with non-Jews. It was edited many times, and translated into Latin by Sebastian Münster.

It was under the care and guidance of Moses Ḳimḥi that the young David, destined to become the most illustrious of his line, grew up. It is hardly surprising that, with such connexions and under such influences, David Ḳimḥi should have become one of the most accomplished of Jewish scholars, well versed in the whole range of Hebrew literature. In later times, one of the sayings from *Pirḳe Aboth* (iii. 21) was applied to him: "Without *ḳemaḥ* (=*fine flour*, the etymon of the name *Ḳimḥi*) no Torah."[27] He is also sometimes called "Sephardi" ("Spaniard") on account of his family's connexion with Spain.

David Ḳimḥi's work was equally notable both in the domain of grammar and philology and in that of exegesis. What may be described as his *magnum opus*, the *Miklol*, to which he constantly refers in his commentaries, is a combination of a Hebrew Grammar

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[25] For details see *JE*, vii. 496 f.

[26] Moses Ḳimḥi probably died about 1190.

[27] The name was pronounced "Ḳamḥi" in Arabic-speaking circles. From the meaning of *ḳemaḥ* = "corn ground *small*" is to be explained the French surname "Maistre Petit."

and a Dictionary of the Bible. This treatise is divided into two quite distinct parts, which were later separated, the second part being issued separately under the title *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, or "Book of Roots"; the title *Miklol* was then retained exclusively for the first, or grammatical, part. While not strikingly original, Ḳimḥi's work has high merit. He is no mere compiler, but marshals his material with the sure hand of a thorough scholar, who possesses in a high degree the power of lucid systematisation and popular exposition. "His grammatical material is drawn chiefly from the works of Ḥayyuj and Ibn Ganaḥ and from the writings of his own father. He tries to understand the language from itself, seeking analogues in later Hebrew, less frequently in Aramaic and Arabic."[28] Ḳimḥi's *Miklol* has exercised a lasting influence not only on Jews, but Christians, and is still taken into account by scientific grammarians, *e.g.* by E. König, who, in his latest important work on Hebrew grammar, writes with constant reference to Ḳimḥi.[29]

In the field of exegesis Ḳimḥi produced commentaries on Genesis, the Prophets, Psalms, and Chronicles, and possibly on other parts of the Bible. Here, again, the qualities exhibited in his grammatical and philological work, which appear in his exposition, made his commentaries exceedingly popular and influential. That on the Prophets is printed in the Rabbinical Bibles, and parts of it have been translated into Latin for Christian use.[30] The commentary on the Psalms was first printed in 1477, and again in the Rabbinical Bible of Chayim, but not in those of Buxtorf and Frankfurter.

His exegesis is based primarily upon an exact and grammatical construction of the text. As a rule, he adheres strictly to the literal meaning (the "Peshaṭ"), but he notices, from time to time, the old Haggadic explanations, as well as (occasionally) the later philosophico-speculative exposition. He constantly quotes older authorities (especially Ibn Ezra), and in his citations from the Targum often offers valuable data for the criticism of its text.

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[28] *JE*, vii. 494.

[29] Both parts of the *Miklol* have been frequently printed, the Grammar as recently as 1862 by Rittenberg at Paris, and the Lexicon at Berlin in 1847 (by Biesenthal and Labrecht). A Latin translation of the second part (the "Book of Roots") was issued in 1535, and of the first part (the "Grammar") in 1540, by Guidacier (Paris).

[30] Isaiah (Melanimeus, at Florence, 1774); Joel and Jonah (Leusden, Utrecht, 1656); and Malachi (De Muis, Paris, 1618). Amos was rendered into German in 1581 (by Veke), and Zechariah into English by McCaul in 1837. It should be added that Ḳimḥi's commentary on Chronicles is accessible also in the Rabbinical Bibles; that on Genesis was printed separately in 1842 (Pressburg).

Special Importance of Ḳimḥi's Work.

Ḳimḥi's work is important not so much for any original element it may contain, which is small, as for the fact that it embodies, and sums up in admirably clear and well-constructed form, the work of previous generations of Jewish scholars. His commentaries are valuable as specimens of Jewish mediæval exegesis, exhibiting this when it had undergone a long process of fruitful development and had attained the strength of maturity. They are also storehouses of rich material preserved in quotations from the work of earlier scholars, which has otherwise passed out of sight. The influence of Ḳimḥi upon Christian scholarship has already been referred to. This was no less pronounced in the field of exegesis, where his commentaries strongly influenced the Latin Bibles of Pagninus (1528) and Münster (1534–35), and through these indirectly the earlier English versions. Ḳimḥi also directly influenced the translators of our Authorised Version (AV)—the King James' Bible of 1611—who worked directly on the Hebrew text, and in particular passages followed the guidance of the famous Jewish exegete. An illustration, taken from the Psalms commentary, will help to make this clear. The difficult passage, Ps. xvi. 2–3, is rendered in the Prayer Book Version as follows :

O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord: Thou art my God, my goods are nothing unto Thee.

All my delight is upon the saints that are in the earth; and upon such as excel in virtue.

In the AV this appears thus :

O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to Thee;

But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.[31]

A reference to Ḳimḥi's exposition of this passage in the commentary printed below will shew that this exegesis agrees essentially with his.

Ḳimḥi's exposition occasionally takes an independent and unfamiliar line, and is always worth consulting. Finally, an interesting feature in his commentary on the Psalms is the anti-Christian polemic found in certain passages (see Psalms ii., vii., xv., xix., and xxii., below), in which Ḳimḥi refutes the Christian application of particular passages to Jesus. The presence of these sections seems in no wise to have diminished the popularity of our author in Christian circles. They were afterwards put together in a separate form, and published as an

[31] So also the Geneva Version of 1560.

anti-Christian tract[32] (Amsterdam, 1709; Königsberg, 1847). It should be added that a Latin translation of the whole of the commentary on the Psalms was made by Janvier, and published at Constanz, 1544.[33]

Sources of the Commentary.

We have already referred, in some detail, to the various sources and authorities cited by our author in his Psalms commentary. Among the older of these are the Targums, Mishnah, and Talmud. On Psalm xxx. 6 he cites the *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, which, in a secondary sense, may be regarded as Talmudic, being a kind of supplement designed to take the place of the missing Gemara to the Mishnah-tractate *Pirḳe Aboth*. It is usually printed as an appendix, with other minor tractates, at the end of editions of the Babylonian Talmud.

Of the Midrashic literature, Ḳimḥi constantly quotes from the Midrash on the Psalms (*Midrash Tehillim* or *Haggadah Tehillim*), which from the twelfth century has usually been cited from its opening words as *Shoḥer Ṭôb*,[34] and is so cited by our author. This Midrashic collection has been extant since the eleventh century, and may have been compiled somewhat earlier, but probably not earlier than the last centuries of the Geonim (tenth to eleventh), according to Zunz.[35] Though a comparatively late compilation, it embodies a considerable amount of traditional material which is much older. Other Midrashim are also cited by our author (*e.g.* *Tanḥuma* and *Pirḳe de R. Eliezer*, on Ps. xix. 5) which need not be further discussed here.

The principal Rabbinical authorities quoted by our author—Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Maimonides—have already been discussed, in connexion with the development of Biblical exegesis, in the earlier part of this Introduction. Besides these, Ḳimḥi also refers to his father, Joseph Ḳimḥi, whose work, together with that of his brother Moses, we have described above. He also refers to Giḳtilla (viii. 3), Dunash

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[32] The anti-Christian passages in the Psalms commentary were deleted from later editions by the censor. It was after this that they were collected and published separately under the title תשובות לנוצרים ("Answers to the Christians"). His anti-Christian וכוח ("Refutation") is contained in מלחמת חובה (Constantinople, 1790).

[33] A shorter form of the commentary appears in the Rabbinical Bible.

[34] = "good reward" (from Prov. xi. 27).

[35] In the MSS. and in the first printed edition this Midrash only extends to Ps. cxviii. In the second printed edition of 1515 a supplement was added embracing Pss. cxix.–cl. with some slight omissions (Pss. cxxiii. and cxxxi.), which have again, in later editions, been supplied from other sources.

(ix. 1), and Menaḥem ben Saruk (xxii. 1), for whom the reader is referred to the notes appended to the passages in the translation below. We have already noticed the work of Solomon ibn Gebirol, who is cited more than once by our author.

Bibliography.

For the edition of the Hebrew text from which the following translation has been made, see the opening section of the Introduction, above.

Besides the works cited in the Introduction, the following are important in this connexion :

Dr. Schiller-Szinessy's article on Ḳimḥi in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th ed.), xiv. 74.

(The relevant articles in the *Jewish Encyclopædia* on *Bible Exegesis*, *David Ḳimḥi*, *Joseph Ḳimḥi*, and *Moses Ḳimḥi* have been several times cited above.)

Bacher in Winter and Wünsche's *Die jüdische Litteratur*, ii. 135 ff., is important, especially pp. 198–206 and 306–14.

An English translation of Ḳimḥi's commentary on Psalms i.–viii. by Dr. A. W. Greenup appeared in 1918 (London, Palestine House, Hackney).

Short Titles and Abbreviations used in this Edition.

AV = Authorised Version.
RV = Revised Version.
PBV = Prayer Book Version (of the Psalms).
JE = *Jewish Encyclopædia* (12 vols.).
RWS^2 = *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, by W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box (2nd ed. London, 1911).

Short Titles of Rabbis.

Maimonides, or "Rambam" = Moses ben Maimon, born at Cordova, died at Fostat ("old Cairo"), in Egypt (1135–1204).
ReDaḲ = Rabbi David Ḳimḥi, 1160–1235 ; son of
RIḲaM = Rabbi Joseph Ḳimḥi, 1105–70.
ReMaḲ = Rabbi Moses Ḳimḥi, ? 1125–90 (son of Joseph and brother of David Ḳimḥi).
Rashi = Rabbi Solomon Yiṣḥaḳi (Solomon ben Isaac), of Troyes (France), 1040–1105.
Rashbam = Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (1100–60), grandson of Rashi.

The Longer Commentary of R. David Ḳimḥi on the First Book of Psalms

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

WITH THE

LONGER COMMENTARY OF R. DAVID ḲIMḤI

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

DAVID, the son of Joseph the son of Ḳimḥi, the Sephardi[1] says: Our teachers—may their memory be blessed!—have said (Babylonian Talmud, *Baba bathra*, folio 14, page *b*, and with some variations also in the Midrashim, *Shoḥer Ṭōb*, Ps. i. and Canticles iv. 4 and *Ḳoheleth* vii. 19) that David, king of Israel, wrote his book with the aid of ten ancients (elders), these being Adam the first, Melchizedek, Abraham, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, Moses, and the three sons of Korah, Assir, Elḳanah, and Abiasaph.[2] They mean that these ten uttered the Psalms written in their name. They have said also (in the Midrashim, *Bereshith Rabbah*, parashah xxii.; *Ḳoheleth* on i. 2; *Pirḳe de Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. xix., and, with some variations, in *Shoḥer Ṭōb* on Ps. xcii.) that Adam the first gave utterance to "*A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath Day*," because he was created on the eve of the Sabbath, and on the Sabbath Day rose and recited the "*Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath Day*" (Ps. xcii.). Again our teachers—may their memory be blessed!—have said (Babli, *Baba bathra* 15*a*): Ethan the Ezrahite means Abraham our father.[3] Again, they have said (Rashi, *ibid.* 14*b*) that the Psalm "*The Lord said unto my lord*"[4] was uttered by Melchizedek; and the rest interpret (thus) in their name. They have also said (*Shoḥer Ṭōb*, Ps. i.) that as Moses our teacher divided the Book of the Law into five books, so David divided the Book of

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[1] See Introduction, p. xviii.

[2] *cf.* Ex. vi. 24.

[3] Abraham is identified as the author of Ps. lxxxix. according to this exegesis. "Ezrahite" (Heb. *'ezrāḥî*) was connected with *mizrāḥ* (=*East*), and "*one from the East*" (Is. xli. 2) was identified with Abraham.

[4] Ps. cx.

Psalms into five books. And they have said (*ibid.*) that this Book is uttered in ten different expressions of praise, viz. in *nissûḏh*, in *niggûn*, in *shîr*, in *zimrāh*, in *hallēl*, in *haskēl*, in *tēhillāh*, in *tefillah*, in *bĕrākāh*, and in *hôdā'āh*.[5]

They have also said (Babli, *Berakhoth* 4 *b* and *Pĕsaḥîm* 117 *a*) that this Book was uttered in the Holy Spirit. Therefore they wrote it in the collection (class) of the Writings (Hagiographa),[6] and not in that of the Prophets, because its words were not uttered in prophecy, but in the Holy Spirit.

We ourselves shall expound somewhat of the distinction that (exists) between Prophecy and the Holy Spirit. For Prophecy is a word[7] coming upon a man who is wise, complete in all his proper attributes[8]—the prophecy may come to him in a dream. And at such time as the prophecy comes to him, on awakening, his emotional faculties[9] will be suspended, and he will be withdrawn from all the [10]affairs and interests[10] of this world, and will see the prophecy in a vision, as though someone were speaking with him and saying so-and-so. Or he will see images in that vision, or he may not see any form, but (simply) hear a voice speaking with him.

And it is the Holy Spirit when the complete man is occupied with the things[11] of God—complete with all his proper attributes, not one of them being in suspension. And he speaks what is spoken in a normal human way,[12] except that a higher spirit moves him and reveals the words upon his tongue, words of praise and thanksgiving to his God, or words of wisdom and instruction. He also speaks concerning the future, with the divine assistance in addition to the power of the speaker—with all the powers of those who speak. And in this power this Book of Psalms was uttered.[13] And although those who uttered

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[5] These expressions refer mainly to the descriptive designations used in the various superscriptions of the Psalms, and mean respectively "glory" (the word rendered "*For the Chief Musician*" is explained in the Midrash on Ps. iv. as = "To Him whose glory is everlasting"), "stringed instruments" or "music," "song," "psalm" (Ps. lxxxi. 2 [3]), "praise," "maskil," "praise," "prayer," "blessing," "thanksgiving."

[6] *i.e.* the third division of the Hebrew Canon of the O.T., which follows the "Prophets." The Book of Psalms stands at the head of the third division.

[7] Or, *thing*.

[8] *i.e.* the man is not at the time preceding the vision in any abnormal condition (*e.g.* of ecstasy).

[9] lit *powers*. [10-10] lit. *ways*.

[11] Or, *words*.

[12] lit. *after the manner of men*, *i.e.* his utterance is normal, involving the use of all his natural faculties in a normal manner.

[13] Ḳimḥi's discussion here is interesting. The distinction between inspired prophecy, and inspiration as exhibited elsewhere in Scripture ("in the Holy

it are called prophets—as is said of David (Neh. xii. 24): "*to praise and to give thanks according to the commandment of David the man of God*"—and this designation is only said of a prophet. And of Jeduthun it is said (1 Chron. xxv. 3): "*who prophesied in giving thanks and praising the Lord.*" It is said also (*ibid. v.* 5): "*of Heman the king's seer in the words of God*"; also it is said (*ibid. v.* 1): "*of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals*"; and it is said (*ibid. v.* 2): "*through Asaph who prophesied through the king*"—everywhere their prophesying was of this order[14] as we have interpreted.

For Prophecy is divided into higher and lower orders.[15] And although Daniel saw visions and revelations, both sleeping[16] and waking, still his power and knowledge in these visions did not approach the power of Isaiah and Ezekiel and the other prophets. For this reason his book is not written in the collection of the Books of the Prophets, but is written in that of the books which are called *Writings*, (which is as much as) to say that they were written in the Holy Spirit.

And this Book David compiled[17] and wrote with his own the words of these above-mentioned singers. Even the Psalms which he himself composed[17] he assigned to singers to sing, as the Psalm, "*O give thanks unto the Lord*" (1 Chron. xvi. 8; *Tehillim*, Psalm cv.), for it is said (1 Chron. xvi. 7): "*Then on that day did David first ordain to give thanks unto the Lord by the hand of Asaph and his brethren*"; and it is said (Ps. lxii. 1): "*For the Chief Musician: for Jeduthun: A Psalm of David*," because David composed[17] it and assigned it to Jeduthun.

Some of the Psalms were uttered with reference to what happened either to him or to Israel (in conflict) with enemies; there are others also which are examples of prayer and thanksgiving without there being any mention of historical fact. And the Psalms which have no superscription "*of David*," David composed[17]; and so also those for which no author is mentioned David composed.[17] And there are also (cases where) "*of David*" is to be interpreted "on David's behalf,"

Spirit"), apparently rests upon the view that the prophets received divine communications immediately in a supranormal manner, while other inspired writers had their natural faculties—which were fully employed—quickened by the divine spirit.

[14] lit. *after this manner.*

[15] lit. *into degrees one higher than the other.* Dr. Schiller-Szinessy refers here to Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, part ii. § 36 (and elsewhere).

[16] lit. *in dream.*

[17] Heb. חבר.

as: "*For the Chief Musician: A Psalm for David. The Lord answer thee in the day of trouble*" (Ps. xx. 1, 2); "*A Psalm for David. The Lord saith unto my lord*" (Ps. cx. 1). And in like manner he wrote to his book a prayer which he found already in writing, and there was a tradition among them that it was by Moses our teacher—on him be peace!—as it is said (Ps. xc. 1): "*A Prayer of Moses.*" He spoke also of things future which happened after his own time, and spoke in it[18] of the Babylonian and other captivities, and of many consolations when the kingdom of the House of David should be restored to its place.

And as for the *nĕgînôth*[19] and the *mizmôrîm*[20] and the *shîrîm*,[21] some of them were uttered with, and some without, the accompaniment of musical instruments. But the (exact) difference which exists between (the meanings of) these expressions which (occur) in the titles of the Psalms is not known to us to-day. Our Rabbis—may their memory be blessed!—have said (Babli, *Pĕsaḥîm* 117 *a*): *niṣṣûăḥ*[22] and *niggûn*[22] have reference to the age to come; *maskîl*[22] (signifies) by the aid of an interpreter; *lĕ Dāvid mizmor* ["of David: a Psalm"] (signifies) that the Holy Spirit rested upon him, and (then) afterwards he uttered a Psalm,[23] while *mizmôr lĕ Dāvid* ["a Psalm of David"] (signifies) that he uttered a Psalm,[23] and (then) afterwards the Holy Spirit rested upon him. But we shall expound this matter further in the fourth Psalm.

And now I will begin to interpret as I shall be able by the help of Him who teaches man knowledge.

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[18] *i.e.* in the Book of Psalms.
[19] = "stringed instruments" (*e.g.* Ps. iv. 1).
[20] = "psalms." [21] = "songs."
[22] See note 5, p. 2. [23] Or, "song" (Heb. *shîrāh*).

PSALM I

1. **Happy the man!** The word אשרי[1] is always used in the plural, the reason being that man is not pronounced "happy" for one good which is found in him, or for one piece of good fortune which befalls him, but for many good things which are found in him men say of him אשרי, "Happy is he!" And David includes in this Psalm the law[2] of man and (a description of) what it is proper for him to do in this world, with a reference also to the good reward there is for the righteous and the punishment for the wicked. It is an exceedingly important Psalm, and therefore he opens his book with it and says:

Who doth not walk in the counsel of the wicked: He first recounts the evil way, as he also says likewise elsewhere (Ps. xxxiv. 15): "*Depart from evil and do good*," because man first learns, from his youth up, the way of the desires of this world, to eat and to drink and to be merry, and in them grows up, as it says (Gen. viii. 21): "*for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*" So and (then) when man arrives at years of discretion and begins to distinguish good and evil, he warns him to depart from the way of the wicked and not to follow their advice.[3] Now the wicked are those who are feverishly anxious to amass wealth and the desires of whose heart are in this world, who do not distinguish between right and wrong, but for money's sake steal and plunder and murder because of the exceeding restlessness of their heart. For the root meaning of רשע (*wickedness*) is "restlessness," as "*When He giveth quietness who then can disturb?*" (ירשיע *disquiet*) (Job xxxiv. 29); "*and whithersoever he turned himself he vexed* (ירשיע *disquieted*) *them*" (1 Sam. xiv. 47); "*neither shall violence* (רשע) *deliver its masters*" (Koheleth viii. 8); "*Be not overmuch engaged* (תרשע) *in worldly matters*" (*ibid.* vii. 17).

1. = "*happy*" (lit. "oh the happinesses of . . . !").
2. Heb. *Torah* = "religion."
3. lit. *walk in their counsel.*

It is on this account that he conjoins *walk* with *wicked*; and with these he joins *counsel*, for they counsel the children of men to listen to them and they shew them specious counsel (to the effect)[4] that it is a fine thing to gather riches and to be merry. And man is largely[5] deceived in this, for the good which is visible to his eyes appears best to him and he does not look to its end. And he (the Psalmist) says:

Nor stand in the way of sinners: for man commits sin while he is in his place at rest, in deed and in word and in thought. And the interpretation of *and in the way* is not the way of walking, but the habit and occupation of the man and his work, as "*and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk*" (Exod. xviii. 20); and "*Yet shall the righteous hold on his way*" (Job xvii. 9); "*not doing thine own ways*" (Is. lviii. 13); "*I declared my ways*" (Ps. cxix. 26), and passages like these. So the interpretation of *nor stand* (is): he does not linger with, nor does he devote himself to them, neither does he remain in their company, lest he should learn of their works.

Nor sit in the seat of the scornful: The *scornful* are those who are crafty in the knowledge of evil, who boast, and speak evil of the children of men, and slander and blame them, and who reveal secrets one to another. And this expression refers to "idlers who sit at the street-corners," and for this reason he says: *nor sit in the seat of the scornful*. Notice that in these three are comprised all man's positions,[6] either he walks or stands or sits. And lying-down is included in sitting; and further (such) lying-down is chiefly to sleep, and while a man is asleep he does neither good nor ill. When he says, *Happy the man!* etc., behold, it is as if he warns him against doing according to their works, for he declares the man happy who withdraws from their way and separates himself from their works. And the interpretation our teachers of blessed memory have placed upon it is (represented) by what they have said (Babli, *Abodah Zarah* 18 *b*): "Inasmuch as he has not walked how has he stood? And inasmuch as he has not stood how has he sat? And inasmuch as he has not sat how has he scorned? It is simply to tell you that if he has walked he will finally stand, and if he has stood he will finally sit, and if he has sat he will finally scorn, and if he has scorned, of him the Scripture says (Prov. ix. 12): '*And if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it.*'"

4. lit. *an appearance by way of counsel.* 5. Or, *in the majority of cases.*
6. Or, *postures.*

2. **But his delight is in the law of the Lord**: He says: If he has departed from the evil way and yet has not done good, behold, he has not performed his work completely and it is not said of him, "Happy is he!" And so it says: "*Depart from evil and do good*" (Ps. xxxiv. 15). And although our teachers of blessed memory have said (Midrash, *Shoher Tōb, ad loc.*), "If a man sits and has not committed sin, he is rewarded as one who performs a *mitzvah*,"[7] they have also interpreted (*ibid.*) [Depart from evil and do good] applying it to the case of him to whom transgression has come[8] and who has been delivered from it, as it is said "*Depart from evil and do good*," *i.e.* Depart from evil for the sake of doing good. And so it says (Ps. cxix. 3), "*Yea, they do no unrighteousness; they walk in His ways.*" And they hold that he who has conquered his inclination[9] in regard to an action is as one who has performed a *mitzvah*, when the temptation[10] has befallen him, and so it is as is said, "*Yea, they do no unrighteousness*," etc.; although they have done no unrighteousness, still it is necessary that they should walk in His ways and do a good work. And so he says, *Happy is the man that walketh not.* But what does he *do*? *His delight is in the law of the Lord.* And included in *delight* is both learning and doing, as (in the text) "*from doing thy delight*" (Is. lviii. 13); and doing apart from learning is not sufficient.

And in His law: He repeats *in His law* as "*Noah, Noah*" three times in one verse (Gen. vi. 9), and "*Israel*" five times in one verse (Num. viii. 19) and other instances besides, for such is the usage of the Hebrew language. And they say (*i.e.* the Grammarians and Commentators, in innumerable places) that it is by way of elegance (in diction). And our teachers of blessed memory comment (Babli, *Abodah Zarah* 19*a*): first it is called "*the law of the Lord*," and lastly, when one is firmly established in it by study, it is made "*His law*" and is called by His name. The interpretation of

doth he meditate (is) "in his heart," as, "*the meditation of my heart in Thy sight*" (Ps. xix. 15); for he has already spoken of learning and doing, and now he speaks of the intention and purpose of the heart, that day and night his purpose should be (fixed) upon the

7. *i.e.* a pious duty enjoined by the Law (lit. "command").
8. *i.e.* who has actually experienced temptation.
9. *i.e.* his evil inclination (Heb. *yēṣer*, in full *yēṣer hā-rā'*), inherent in human nature, which, if yielded to, leads to actual sin; *cf.* Gen. vi. 5; viii. 21, where "imagination" (R.V.) = *yēṣer*.
10. lit. *transgression*.

Law and the Commandments. And therefore an injunction is given concerning them in every action which he shall perform, as they say (*Aboth*, chap. i. para. 3),[11] "And let all thy actions be to the name (for the sake) of Heaven." And (as a matter of fact) *in His law doth he meditate day and night* because he occupies himself in study. In the Haggadic[12] interpretation (Midrash, *Shoher Tōb*, *ad loc.*) they say: "And how is it possible to meditate day and night? His work and his trade—how and when should he accomplish these? (Answer) But everyone who fulfils the commandment of the phylacteries,[13] the Scripture gives him credit as if he had studied day and night." And some say (*ibid.*): "Everyone who recites the Shema[14] morning and night." But we say, following the literal sense, if we explain *doth meditate* of learning by rote, then the interpretation of

day and night will be: every time that he shall be free from his business occupations,[15] whether of the day or the night.

3. **And he shall be like a tree:** He compares the good man to a tree

planted over the streams of water: and says that the man who departs from evil and does good, lo! he is as a tree planted upon streams of water which is continually satisfied; so he rejoices continually in his portion whether he have little to eat or much. And the interpretation of *streams of water* (is) that there is a stream of water on this side and a stream of water on that side, and they will be passing under it and it will be always over them.

That bringeth forth its fruit in its season: for the tree that is in a thirsty spot and that longs for rain does not bring forth its fruit in its season so long as the necessary rain does not descend, but

11. In the ordinary editions of *The Ethics of the Fathers* (*Pirke Aboth*) the ref. is ii. 17 (16).
12. *i.e.* the free (homiletic) interpretation embodied especially in the various Midrashim.
13. The phylacteries (Heb. *tefillin*) are two in number, and are worn by pious Jews during the recital of the morning service on week-days, one on the head and the other on the left arm. They contain the following passages from the Law written (in Hebrew) on parchment: Ex. xiii. 1–10, 11–16; Deut. vi. 4–9 and 11–21. See further *RWS*², pp. 447 ff.
14. The recitation of the *Shema'* (Deut. vi. 4–9; xi. 13–21; and Num. xv. 37–41) is one of the central and ancient features of Jewish liturgical worship (see Singer, pp. 37–44). It is recited by every pious Jew morning and evening.
15. lit. *from the occupations of his livelihood.*

is late and backward in putting forth its fruit because of its parched condition ; but the tree that is planted upon the streams of water brings forth its fruit in its season.

His leaf also shall not wither : for the leaf withers from dryness, but in the case of this (that is planted) over the streams of water —its leaf does not wither. And (the phrase) *in its season*, which he has mentioned already, is to be supplied here,[16] as if he said : *its leaf shall not wither in its season* ; and this is the hot season[17] when the children of men need its shade. Notice that the children of men who are crossing backwards and forwards find in it (a source of) refreshment, and rest beneath it for the shade of its leaves, and drink from the water under it, and eat of its fruit, for in the rainy season the leaves fall from most of the trees. Or it may be (taken) hyperbolically ; for even in the rainy season its leaf does not fall, as is the case with some trees, from the nature of the large amount of sap in them. And as it says, "*its leaf shall not wither nor fail*" (Ezek. xlvii. 12) ; it says also, "*And the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing*" (*ibid.*), so from the good man the children of men get his fruit and his instruction, and it is from him they learn his Law (religion) and his good works. *Whose leaf also shall not wither*, for they will take refuge in the shadow of his good ways. Our teachers have expounded (Babli, *Abodah Zarah* 19*b*) *bringeth forth in its season* (as meaning) that he teaches when he has attained the right to teach[18] and not before his time ; but when he has attained his time he does not hold back from the office. And the interpretation of *in its season* (is) in the time for learning, learning, and in the time for work, work. And further our teachers of blessed memory have interpreted (*ibid.* with a slight change) *whose leaf also shall not wither* (as meaning) that even the conversation of the wise must be studied, as though to say that even from their ordinary conversation a man can learn instruction (in the affairs of) the world and (proper) human conduct (in intercourse) one with another.

And whatsoever he produceth shall prosper : If a cutting[19] is taken from this tree it flourishes and becomes like it ; so also in the case of the good man, his children and his descendants shall be like him. And our teachers (*ibid.*) have interpreted thus : *and*

16. lit. *stands in the place of two.*
17. lit. *the season of the days of the sun.*
18. *i.e.* the publicly recognised right to teach conferred by admission to the Rabbinical office.
19. lit. *planting* (slip).

whatsoever he produceth (doeth, shall prosper—if he "busies himself with Torah (study) his worldly affairs shall prosper." It is possible also to interpret this verse by way of blessing and peace and good reward ; for if he departs from the evil way and does good his recompense will be that he shall be *like a tree planted upon the streams of water.* The learned Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra of blessed memory has interpreted (thus) : *his fruit* is the wise[20] soul which shall be full of Torah and divine wisdom, so as to recognise her Creator and His works which abide for ever ; and will cleave to the world above on her separation from the body, like the fruit which when it ripens on the tree separates itself from and has no further need of it ; for the tree exists for the sake of the fruit. *Whose l af also shall not wither—i.e.* his good memorial, in accordance with (the text) " *the memory of the just is blessed"* (Prov. x. 7). *And whatsoever he getteth shall prosper—i.e.* wealth, children, and honour.

4. **Not so the wicked !**

But they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

He says that the wicked, and in these the sinners and the scornful are included, are not so, for the children of men are not profited by them and by their good (fortune), but they (only) do them harm. Their impulse also for evil is like *the chaff*—that is, the light stubble in the straw, which is no use to the sons of men, which *the wind driveth away* very quickly, and which does harm in its movement, for it strikes passers-by in the face and eyes ; or *the wind driveth* it into houses or gardens, and it does harm (there). And according to the latter interpretation which we have adopted of the previous verse—of requital and good reward—the interpretation of this verse will be, that the wicked will perish very quickly like *the chaff which the wind driveth away.*

5. **Therefore wicked men shall not rise up :** Therefore, since the wicked walk in an evil way in this world, they shall not rise up

in the Judgment : He means to say, in the Day of Judgment, and that is the day of death, they shall have no rising again.

Nor sinners likewise ; and it is the judgment on the scornful—they shall have no rising again.

in the congregation of righteous men : for the righteous, when they die, shall have a rising again ; but as for the wicked, for them

20. *i.e.* rational.

there is none, but their soul shall perish with their body in the day of death. And he says *in the congregation*, for when the righteous dies his soul is with the souls of the righteous rejoicing in the glory of the Most High.

6. **For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous**: This verse is an explanation of the preceding; for he says *in the congregation of righteous men* without explaining in what sense the congregation of the righteous after death is (to be understood); therefore he interprets and says *that* (the Lord) *knoweth*; and the meaning of *knoweth* is "looks upon and considers with a view to doing them good." And so (in the passage) "*What is man that Thou takest knowledge of him?*" (Ps. cxliv. 3); "*Whom the Lord knew*" (Deut. xxxiv. 10); "*for I know his sorrows*" (Exod. iii. 7); "*Thou hast known my soul in adversities*" (Ps xxxi. 8); "*I did know thee*" (Hos. xiii. 5). In this way too (we understand) "*there is no man that will recognise me*" (Ps. cxlii. 5); "*blessed be he that did recognise thee*" (Ruth ii. 19). He says that God who is exalted gathers the souls of the righteous to Himself, and knows them, and recognises them to do them good and satisfy them with His goodness and knowledge and care;[21] for this is the greatest good and the best recompense, as it is said: "*and the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with (the soul of) the Lord thy God*" (1 Sam. xxv. 29).

But the way of the wicked shall perish: for at their death they have no rising again, as he has said *they shall not rise up*; but their souls shall perish and go to perdition, as it is said (*ibid.*): "*and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling.*"

21. Or, *providence*.

PSALM II

1. **Why do the nations rage:** This Psalm is the second; and so we find it in all the more accurate books, that (these words) are the beginning of a Psalm. And in enumeration they inscribe it as the second. But some of our teachers have said (Babli, *Berakhoth* 9*b*) that *Happy is* and *Why do the nations rage* form a single Psalm. And they have said (*ibid.* 10*a*) "Every section which was (specially) dear to David, he opened and closed with '*Happy is* (*are*).' And this section he opened with '*Happy is the man*,' and closed with '*Happy are all they that put their trust in Him*.'" The reason why this Psalm follows immediately the other is not known to us; nor why he arranged them in the order in which they are connected, for they are not arranged in historical order. For instance, the third Psalm is concerned with the affair of Absalom, and after it occur many Psalms whose subject-matter is earlier by a considerable period than the incident of Absalom. Notice also, at the end of the book, Psalm cxlii., "*When he was in the cave; a Prayer*," (has reference to events) in the days of Saul. Therefore we cannot explain the arrangement of the Psalms according to the historical order.

David composed and recited this Psalm in the opening of his reign, when the nations were gathered against him, as it is said (2 Sam. v. 17) "*and when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel all the Philistines went up to seek David*." And this is his meaning in saying *Why do they tumultuously assemble* (רגשו)? because all the Philistines had come up. And רגשה has the sense of *gathering* and *great multitude*, as (Ps. lxiv. 3), "*from the throng* (רגשת) *of the workers of iniquity*;" and the Targum of the passage (Ez. xxx. 10) "*I will also make the multitude* (המון) *of Egypt cease*," is, "*and I will make of no avail the raging* (אירגושת)[1] *of Egypt*."

And the peoples imagine a vain thing?—for when they came to make war they were saying proud things, because they had

1. *cf.* also the Targum of Ruth i. 19: "And all the city was *moved* (*wĕ'argĕshû*) about them."

conquered Israel in the wars of Saul, and Saul and his sons were dead, and the people had been severely smitten. And from Saul's death until now there had not been another king for Israel. And he says, *a vain thing* is (the sum of) all their words.

2. **The kings of the land take their stand:** for all the satraps of the Philistines had taken their stand with one consent and in agreement to come to fight with David. And he calls them "kings" and "rulers," although we have not seen any other passage where he describes them otherwise than as "satraps" of the Philistines, who in their pride were imagining themselves kings, though they were not so. Possibly also there were assembled with them other kings from the nations.

And rulers take counsel (נוסדו) **together:** They had all consulted together as one. Counsel also is expressed in the word יסוד (*foundation*), for counsel is to actual performance as the foundation to a building.

Against the Lord and against His anointed: for they knew that David was king by the appointment of the Lord, and Samuel the prophet of the Lord had anointed him king.

3. **Let us break their bands asunder:** They were saying: "Let us break the bands of Israel and their league (lit. binding) in which they have bound themselves and agreed to make David king." For there had elapsed seven years in which Israel as a whole had not agreed about him to make him king, and now when they had all agreed about him the Philistines said "Let us break their bands asunder."

And cast away their cords from us: He repeats himself in different words,[2] while the meaning is the same, for such is the idiom of the language. And the "bands" and "cords" denote the strongest ropes, and are a figure for counsel and firm agreement.

4. **He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh;**
The Lord shall have them in derision.

As he has said that they have taken counsel together against the Lord, to nullify His word, (so now) he says that He *sits in heaven*, and hears their words, and *laughs at* and *derides* them. And when he says of God—Blessed be He!—He *shall laugh at*

2. lit. *And this is a duplication of the matter in different words.*

and *deride* (them), it is metaphorical, an accommodation to human language; for a man laughs at and mocks one whom he despises and esteems as nothing at all. And so: "*And Thou, Lord, shalt laugh at them, Thou shalt mock at all the nations*" (Ps. lix. 9); "*The Lord shall laugh at him, for He sees that his day is coming*" (Ps. xxxvii. 13). And when he says: *He that sitteth in the heavens*, the meaning of "sitting" is *abiding* (*enduring*), as "*and Thou, Lord, remainest* (lit. *sittest*) *for ever*" (Ps. cii. 13). And so every expression of *sitting*, when it is used of God—Blessed be He!—as. "*O Thou that sittest in the heavens*" (Ps. cxxiii. 1); "*That hath His seat on high*" (Ps. cxiii 5). And when he says *in the heavens*. it is because they are stable and endure for ever, and their individualities do not come to an end like those of the earth.

5. **Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath:** *Then*, when He shall hear their words and their pride, *He shall speak unto them in His wrath.*

And vex them in His sore displeasure: And His words with them are His anger and sore displeasure which He shall hurl at them. Some interpret דבר (*speak*) in the sense of דֶּבֶר (*plague*) [in the passage] "*a plague* (דבר) *grievously heavy*" (Exod. ix. 3). And so (also) "*and she destroyed* (ותדבר) *all the seed royal*" (2 Chron. xxii. 10); and they interpret אליהם (*to them*) as in the verse "*the* אלי (*chief men*) *of the land*" (2 Kings xxiv. 15), of which the meaning is *the powerful ones of the land*. But the former is nearer (to the right meaning).

6. **Yet I have set My king:** He says: They, forsooth, are purposing to root out the kingdom from the house of David, though I have made him king and set him up! And the word נסכתי connotes chieftainship and greatness, as (in the verse) "*the princes* (נסיכי) *of Sihon*" (Josh. xiii. 21); and also "*their gods with their princes*" (בנסיכם) (Dan. xi. 8). *My king*—he means to say, The king that is Mine in that I have made him king; just as it is said (1 Sam. xvi. 1) "*For I have provided among his sons a king for Myself.*" He means by *for Myself*, for My worship, and so he says *My king*. And conversely it is said (Ps. lxxiv. 12): "*And God is my King from of old*," where the meaning is, who rules over me. Thus is the usage of the pronominal suffixes.[3] And so (in the verse) "*Remove Thy stroke from me*" (Ps. xxxix. 11); "*Aloof from My plague do they stand*" (Ps. xxxviii. 12); "*and I*

3. *i.e.* they are used subjectively and objectively.

will make them joyful in My house of prayer" (Is. lvi. 7); "*I have heard thy prayer*" (1 Kings ix. 3; 2 Kings xx. 5; Is. xxxviii. 5; 2 Chron. vii. 12), and other similar (examples), as we have explained in the book *Miklōl*[4] in the grammatical section of it. And he says:

Upon My holy hill of Sion: Because the stronghold of Sion was not conquered until David came to subdue it, therefore Sion with Jerusalem is called the City of David. And after he had subdued it the Philistines gathered together to fight against him.

7. **Let me declare it for a decree:** This is the utterance of David, who says, I will make this declaration a decree and rule. And what is the declaration? That

The Lord said unto me, Thou art My son: and the kingdom has come to me from Him, and therefore let no man stir up strife against it, for the Lord hath chosen me for a son, as He said to Samuel (1 Sam. xvi. 1): "*For I have provided among his sons a king for Myself.*" It is as though to say, "This king is Mine and he is My son and servant and obeys Me"—for everyone who is obedient in the service of God He calls His son, just as a son obeys his father and is ready for his service. And so (in the verse) "*ye are sons of the Lord your God*" (Deut. xiv. 1), and "*I will be his Father and he shall be My son*" (2 Sam. vii. 14); and it says (Hos. ii. 1), "*the sons of the living God.*"

This day have I begotten thee: The day when he was anointed was the day God took him to Himself for a son, as it says (1 Sam. xvi. 1), "*to Me a king.*" And he says, *This day have I begotten thee*, for on that day there was born in him the spirit of God, as is written (1 Sam. xvi. 13), "*And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day and onward.*" And from that day onward he gave expression to songs and psalms by the Holy Spirit, which was born in him and imparted to him by God. Moreover, the spirit of might was added to him from that day onward; and so it says (Deut. xxxii. 18), "*Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful*," which made thee great and put wisdom in thine heart and intelligence, in the day of the station[5] at Mount Sinai. And so it says (*ibid.* 6), "*Is not He thy Father that hath bought thee?*" For if he had said *begotten thee, bought thee* in reference to (the act of) creation, this would have been no more true of Israel than the rest of men. Do you not see what he

4. See Introduction. 5. Heb. *ma'ămād.*

says, "*Do ye thus requite the Lord?*" (*ibid.*), meaning, "This is the requital you make Him for all the good He has done to you! Surely He is thy Father who bought thee!" And he says, "*Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful and hast forgotten the God that gave thee birth*" (*ibid.* 18), just as he says *thy Father*, for He is to you as a father, and the one that gave thee birth—that is, the mother.

8. **Ask of Me:** And He says to me, *Ask of Me.*

and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance: as He said to him, "*And I have cut off all thine enemies from before thee; and I will make thee a great name like unto the name of the great ones that are in the earth*" (2 Sam. vii. 9); and it says (*ibid.* viii. 14), "*And all the Edomites became servants to David*"; and it says (*ibid.* viii. 6), "*And the Syrians became servants to David*"; and it says (1 Chron. xiv. 17), "*and the fame of David went out into all the lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all the nations.*" And this is what he means when he says, *I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance.*"

And the uttermost parts (אפסי) **of the earth for thy possession:** They are the *ends* (קצות) *of* the earth, and (the Hebrew words) אפס and קץ are approximate in meaning.

9. **Thou shalt break** (תרעם) **them with a rod of iron:** And so He says to me of all the nations that shall rise up against me, *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron.*

Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel: The word תרעם has the same meaning as תשברם (*Thou shalt break them*). And so, "*Can one break* (יָרֵעַ) *iron?*" (Jer. xv. 12); "*He breaketh in pieces* (ירע) *mighty men*" (Job xxxiv. 24); so also תנפצם (*Thou shalt dash them in pieces*) has the meaning of "break," but with (the added idea of) "scattering," for when one breaks an earthenware vessel its broken pieces are scattered. And so (in the verse) "*and dashed in pieces the pitchers*" (Judges vii. 19); and the maker of an earthenware vessel is called a potter.

10. **Now therefore, O ye kings:** David said to them, to the kings who came to fight him, "*O kings!*"

be wise: and know that you have no power to nullify God's work, since He it is who commissioned me to be king. And how have ye dared to meet together against the Lord? Be wise and give heed, for ye are not able to nullify the Lord's work.

Be instructed, ye judges of the earth: If hitherto ye have been foolish and ill-advised, now *be wise* and receive *instruction*, and be not haughty.

11. **Serve the Lord:** Take pleasure in what He takes pleasure in, and *serve* Him

with fear: because ye should be in awe of Him, and know that power and might are His, and not with you who have come up with much people;

And exult: Be not angry at (the fact of) my kingdom, but be glad and *exult*, because it is the good pleasure of God;

with trembling: and *tremble* because of Him.

12. **Kiss the son:** as (in the verse) "*and he kissed all his brethren*" (Gen. xlv. 15). And (the word) בר is the same as בן; and so "*What, my son* (ברי)*?*"; and "*what, O son* (בר) *of my womb?*" (Prov. xxxi. 2). Or it may be interpreted by "*the pure* (ברי) *of heart*" (Ps. lxxiii. 1). If its meaning is "son," this will be its interpretation: *Kiss* this son whom God has called "son," as He says (above): *Thou art My son.* And the command is *Kiss*, because it is the custom for a servant to kiss the hand of the master. And if its meaning is "pure," its interpretation is, "What have I to do with you, for I am *pure* in heart and there is no wickedness in me that ye should come and fight against me? Your duty is to kiss me and to confess that I am king by the command of God."[6] And בר may also be fittingly interpreted from (the verse) "*Choose* (ברו) *you a man for you*" (1 Sam. xvii. 8), upon the analogy of "*Saul the chosen of the Lord*" (2 Sam. xxi. 6).[7]

lest He be angry: If ye turn not speedily from your evil ways God will *be angry* with you.

and ye perish in the way,

For His wrath will soon be kindled: *Soon*, because ye continue in your wickedness, *His anger will burn* upon you, as if to say, If ye do not quickly repent. And the interpretation of *and ye perish in the way* is as (in the verse) "*and the way of the wicked shall perish*" (Ps. i. 6). And behold the way perishes and they

6. Then render: "Kiss the pure one"; others render: "Worship in purity" (R.V. margin).
7. Then render: "Kiss the chosen one."

are perishing because of their way which is perishing, as "*an oak fading as to its leaves*" (Is. i. 30). Because the leaves are fading the oak is called a *fading* one. And so, "*the torn of clothes*" (2 Sam. xiii. 31(2)), and elsewhere, for the clothes are torn and not they (*i.e.* the wearers), and they are called *torn* because of their clothes which are torn. And so (Jer. xli. 5), "*Shaven as to their beards and rent of clothes*," and other similar instances. And he says :

Happy are all they that put their trust in Him : as I am this day, because I have put my trust in Him, and am saved by Him while ye perish ; but if ye trust in Him they shall likewise say of you, "Happy are ye !"

And there are some who interpret this Psalm of Gog and Magog,[8] and the anointed one is King Messiah ; and so our teachers of blessed memory have interpreted (Babli, *Berakhoth* 7 *b*). And the Psalm can be explained in this way, but the better is that David uttered it concerning himself, as we have interpreted.

And the Nazarenes[9] interpret it of Jesus ; and the verse they adduce by way of proof and make a support of their error is really their stumbling-block : it is *The Lord said unto me, Thou art My son.* For if they should say to you that he was the Son of God, answer that it is not proper to say "Son of God" in the manner of flesh and blood ; for a son is of the species of his father. Thus it would not be proper to say, "This horse is the son of Reuben." If this be so, he to whom *the Lord* said, *Thou art My son*, must necessarily be of His species, and be God like Him. And further, He says, *I have this day begotten thee* ; and the begotten is of the same species as the begetter. Say (also) to them that of the Godhead it is unfitting (to speak of) father and son ; because the Godhead cannot be divided, for it is not a body that it should be divided ; but God is one in every aspect of unity ; He cannot be increased, decreased, or split up. And further say to them that a father is prior to a son in time, and the son issues from the father's vigour ; and although it is not proper to use one term without the other as regards nomenclature, for one is not called father until he have a son, and a son is not so called unless he have a father, nevertheless he who is called father when he has a son is prior in time without any doubt. And if this be so, the God whom you speak of and call "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"= the portion you call Father existed before the other portion you

8. *i.e.* the enemies of the Messiah who wage war against Him in the last days.

9. *i.e.* the Christians.

call Son. For if they had been always together they should have been called twin brothers, and you would not call them Father and Son, nor begetter and begotten. For the begetter is prior to the begotten without doubt.

And if they say that it is not fitting to say "Son of God" of anything which is not of the divine species, say to them that we are unable to speak of God—Blessed be He!—except in metaphorical language, as it is said of Him "mouth of the Lord," "eyes of the Lord," "ears of the Lord," and such like, and it is understood that such (language) is metaphorical only. And so it is by way of metaphor when it says "son of God" or "sons of God"; for he who does His commands and commission is called "son," as the son does the father's commands. So He calls the stars *sons of God*, as (in the verse) "*and all the sons of God shouted for joy*" (Job xxxviii. 7).

So man, by reason of the higher spirit which is in him, when he does the commandments of God because of the wise soul which teaches him, He calls "son"; and therefore He says, *Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee.*"

He says also "*Israel is My son, My first-born*" (Exod. iv. 22); it says also "*Ye are sons of the Lord your God*" (Deut. xiv. 1); and it says (*ibid.* xxxii. 6) "*Is not He thy Father which hath bought thee?*" and "*I will be to him a Father and he shall be to Me a son*" (2 Sam. vii. 14).

And further say to them, Has the God whom you describe as "the Father" said to His Son, *Ask of Me and I will give the nations for thine inheritance?* How should the Son ask from the Father? Is he not God like Him? And has he not power over the nations and the ends of the earth even as He? And further, before this request, were not the nations already his possession? If so, was God less powerful at the beginning and afterwards of greater power? This cannot be said of God. And if they say to you that it is spoken in regard to the flesh, after the Godhead had taken flesh, and to (the Son in) the flesh He says that he should ask from Him and He would give the nations for his inheritance—this is not the case, for (Jesus in) the flesh had no kingdom nor any authority over any nation of the nations. And if they say to you that it is about the (spread of the) faith (religion) he speaks which should be accepted, behold the great number of nations, Jews and Mohammedans, who have not accepted his faith.

Behold I have taught you what to reply to them in this Psalm, and you can add of your own after the tenor of these words. And if they ask you its meaning, then interpret it in one of these two ways as you choose, either of David or King Messiah, as I have interpreted it for you.

PSALM III

1. **A Psalm of David when he fled from before Absalom his son:** Our teachers of blessed memory have explained (Midrash, *Shoher Tōb*, *ad loc.*; Babli, *Berakhoth* 7 *b*) that David gave utterance to this Psalm as he ascended the Mount of Olives, as it is said (2 Sam. xv. 30), "*And David went up by the ascent of the* (*Mount of*) *Olives and wept as he went up.*" If weeping, why singing, and if singing, why weeping? (Nay) but as soon as the prophet said to him (*ibid.* xii. 11): "*Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house*," he said, "Perhaps it is a slave [or a *nathin*[1]] or a bastard, one of the members of the household, who has no pity on me?" As soon as he saw that it was his son he thought that he certainly would have pity upon him, and he said: *A Psalm.* Further they say (Midrash, *Shoher Tōb*, *ad loc.*): "[Thus] David said: Jacob our father fled (Gen. xxvii. 43); as it is said (Hos. xii. 13): '*And Jacob fled into the field of Aram.*' Moses fled, as it is said (Exod. ii. 15) '*and Moses fled;*' and I am a fugitive as they were. I thought that I was condemned to death, and now that I am going into exile, exile atoneth for iniquity"[2] (Babli, *Berakhoth* 56 *a*; *Sanhedrin* 37 *b*). He says: "*I have remembered Thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself*" (Ps. cxix. 52). I remember the men of old time—and Thou hast borne with me as Thou didst with them—and am comforted, knowing that through my flight the iniquity has been pardoned me. He begins and says *A Psalm of David*, (to be taken) according to the literal sense. For the Psalms were not so named (called) at the time of (the actual) event, but because they were sung in the Sanctuary. So, "*When Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul*" (Ps. lii. 2); and "*When the Ziphites came*" (Ps. liv. 2); and "*And they watched the house to kill him*" (Ps. lix. 1). Similarly, those which have reference to the Exile and the Destruction of Jerusalem, as, "*A Psalm of Asaph. O God, the*

1. *Nathin* ("dedicated"). The "Nethinim" were a minor class of Temple-servants, subordinate to the Levites. They are frequently mentioned in Ezra–Nehemiah, and once in Chronicles.
2. Death, exile, and suffering were held to possess an atoning power.

heathen are come into Thine inheritance" (Ps. lxxix. 1). So all those which were uttered with reference to David, on an historical occasion when David was in danger, but after he had been delivered from them all they became Psalms and praise and confession to God—Blessed be He!—while those which were uttered concerning the Exile became Psalms on the Return of the Exiles. Now it is possible that this Psalm is connected with the preceding because the Philistines had come against David to contest his right to the kingdom and fight with him; and so Absalom his son proposed to take the kingdom from his father and kill him, but [David] conquered all and was left in possession of the kingdom. Our rabbis of blessed memory who have interpreted the Second Psalm of Gog and Magog have said (Babli, *Berakhoth* 10 *a*), "Why is the passage about Absalom (Ps. iii) connected with the passage of Gog and Magog? For this reason. If a man should say to thee, Is it possible that a servant would rebel against his master? say to him, Is it possible a son would rebel against his father? But so it was—it really was so."

2. **Lord, how are mine adversaries increased!** For even his son had turned against him for an enemy, and Amasa, his sister's son, was with Absalom, and the greater part of Israel, whose heart inclined after Absalom; and this is reason for the repetition.[3]

Many they are that are rising up against me: All were *rising up* against him and were taking counsel to fight against him; and Shimei ben Gera even, who dared to reproach him and to pelt him with stones.

3. **Many there are which say of my soul** (לנפשי): that is, "about my soul," as "*Say concerning me* (לי), *He is my brother*" (Gen. xx. 13); "*and the men of the place asked of his wife* (לאשתו)" (*ibid.* xxvi. 7), and such like. And the reason: because many of the wise ones of Israel, as Ahithophel and others, were of opinion that this punishment came to him on account of the affair of Bathsheba, as was actually the case; and they were thinking likewise that the kingdom would never return to him; therefore they followed Absalom and rebelled against him, and were saying that for him there was no portion in the world to come. Therefore he says *of my soul.* And he says:

There is no salvation (ישועתה) **for him in God:** There is no salvation for him in this world, for he cannot escape from the hand of Absalom, neither is there salvation for his soul in the world to

3. *i.e. rabbû*, "are increased," and *rabbîm*, "many."

come. For this reason it is that he uses the intensive form ישועתה ["salvation"], his meaning being *salvation and salvation*; for every reduplication of ending[4] is (equivalent) to a duplication of meaning; and in like manner (we have) עזרתה[5] (Ps. xliv. 27; lxiii. 8; xciv. 17) (meaning) "great help"; תבואתה[6] (Deut. xxxiii. 16); נפלאתה[7] (2 Sam. i. 26); החבאתה[8] (Josh. vi. 17)—as I have written in the grammatical part of the book *Miklōl*.[9] And so in the Haggadic interpretation (*Shoḥer Tōb, ad loc.*) it says: "*Great ones are saying, i.e.* (men) great in the Torah . . . Doeg the Ab beth Din [10] it was of whom it is said '*chiefest of Saul's shepherds*' (1 Sam. xxi. 8); '*And Ahithophel was counsellor*' (1 Chron. xxvii. 33); '*and the counsel of Ahithophel which he counselled in those days was as if a man inquired at the oracle of God*' (2 Sam. xvi. 23). And what was it they were saying? 'Is it possible! The man who took captive the ewe-lamb and slew the shepherd and caused Israel to fall by the sword, shall there be salvation for him? *There is no salvation for him in God!*'"

Selah: The majority of commentators say of the word *Selah* that it is equivalent to לעולם ("for ever"); and so Jonathan[11] renders it in the Prayer of Habakkuk (iii. 3, 9, 13) *for ever* (לעלמין). And in this sense the word is common in our prayers.[12] And the learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra—may the memory of the just be blessed!—has interpreted (*ad loc.*) that it is equivalent to אמת (*truth*). For myself, I say it is not a significant word.[13] And it is to be interpreted as having the meaning "lifting up" (of the

4. lit. "duplication (by way) of addition." Kimḥi regards the reduplicated ending (*yĕshū'āthāh* for the normal *yĕshū'āh*) as equivalent to a repetition of the word.
5. For *'ezrāh*.
6. For *tābō'āh* ("let it come" abundantly).
7. For *niphlĕ'āh* ("very wonderful").
8. For *hehbī'ah* ("she hid carefully").
9. See Introduction.
10. *i.e.* Vice-President of the Sanhedrin (lit. "Father of the House of Justice"). The implication that the Sanhedrin was already in existence and fully organised is, of course, an anachronism. But such offered no difficulties to the Midrash. Note that "shepherds" is taken by the Midrash in a metaphorical sense = "counsellors."
11. *i.e.* Jonathan ben Uzziel, the reputed author of the Targum on the Prophets.
12. *i.e.* in the older prayers of the Synagogue Liturgy where *Selah* is used, apparently in the same way as in the Psalms.
13. *i.e.* it has no significance as a part of the subject-matter of the Psalm, but stands independent of the context.

musical accompaniment) from (the passage) "*cast up, cast up* (סלו) *the way*" (Is. lxii. 10), signifying that at the point where this word is mentioned and read there was a raising of the sound of the music (מזמור). And the proof is in the fact that it is not found except in this book[14] and in the Prayer of Habakkuk, which was a song (accompanied by music), as is written also there (iii. 19), "*For the chief musician on my stringed instruments.*"

4. **But Thou, O Lord, art a shield about me**:—the opposite of their words who are saying that there is no hope for me in this world, nor in the world to come. Thus they are thinking and saying; but Thou wilt deal with me in the very opposite way and wilt be a *shield about me* to deliver me in this world and a *shield about me* in the world to come.

My glory: The "glory" is the soul, as "*and my glory rejoiceth*" (Ps. xvi. 9); "*in order that (my) glory may sing praise to Thee*" (Ps. xxx. 13), and (the word) "shield" which he has already used is to be understood here, "*a shield about me*" and "a shield of my glory." Or the interpretation of *my glory* may be: the opposite of the dishonour which was his as a fugitive.

and the lifter up of mine head: so that I shall not be put to shame nor my countenance fall before my enemies, but I shall walk erect and with uplifted head; for when Thou deliverest me they will recognise and know that Thou hast pardoned me the iniquity through this punishment with which Thou dost punish me.

5. **I cry unto the Lord with my voice**: *i.e. unto the Lord with my voice*, for I cry to Him by reason of (my) distress.

And He answered me: a past (tense) in place of a future, equivalent to "and He will answer me"; and there are many similar cases. Or, it may be taken according to its literal sense; for he was confident of this. Or the Holy Spirit made a revelation upon his tongue; and this is the correct view—for we have already interpreted that all the Psalms were uttered in the Holy Spirit.[15] And in the greater part of prophecy this is found, that the speaker uses a past tense in place of a future; for it is as though the thing had already happened when it has been spoken in the Holy Spirit.

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14. *i.e.* the Book of Psalms. The designation מזמור ("Psalm") implies a musical accompaniment. Perhaps "Selah" means the "striking up" of the interlude of stringed instruments between the choruses.

15. See the "Author's Preface" translated at the beginning of this Commentary.

out of His holy hill. Selah: We can interpret (this) of Mount Moriah. And although it was not yet holy, it may be that there was a tradition among them that the Sanctuary would be there. And because of this David, in his flight, ascended the Mount of Olives and from thence worshipped God; for from thence one can see that (holy) place. Or the interpretation of *out of His holy hill* (may be): from Mount Sion, where the Ark was. Or the interpretation of *out of His holy hill* (may be) *out of heaven*, as "*Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?*" (Ps. xv. 1).

6. **I laid me down and slept:** *I laid me down* in safety *and slept* in peace as a man free from fear.

I awaked, and was not troubled as is a man sleeping in the midst of distress who on waking is troubled; for while he sleeps he sees evil dreams according to what he has imagined because of his fear. And why am I confident in Thee to this full extent? Because I know that

(for) the Lord sustaineth me: for so I saw in a dream. And in the Haggadic interpretation (Midrash, *Shoher Tōb, ad loc.*): "*I laid me down* from prophecy, *and slept* from the Holy Spirit, *and awaked* by the agency of Hushai the Archite, *for the Lord sustains me* by means of Nathan the prophet." His intention is to say that by reason of the toil and fear in which he was the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from David; and the Holy Spirit does not rest (dwell) except in the midst of joy (Babli, *Shabbath* 30 *b*; *Pesaḥim* 117 *a*). And when he saw Hushai the Archite he rejoiced in him, for he knew that he would frustrate for him the counsel of Ahithophel, and he awoke, and the Holy Spirit rested upon him, and he said *For the Lord sustaineth me*, by the agency of Nathan the prophet, who said to him, "*The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die*" (2 Sam. xii. 13).

7. **I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people:** for all Israel were with Absalom, except those who were with David in Jerusalem, and had gone out with him, and those who had joined him afterwards.

That have set themselves (שתו) **against me round about:** They *have set* their battle in array against me. Or the interpretation of שתו may be "they have fought." And so "*they have taken their stand*" (fought, שת שתו) "*at the gate*" (Is. xxii. 7); and "*He will assail* (ישית) *thy waves with violence*" (Job xxxviii. 11).

8. **Rise, O Lord ; save me, O my God :** קומה (*Rise*) has the accent *milra'*,[16] and so on every occasion where the word occurs in this book, with the exception of "*and stand up* (וקומה) *for mine help*" (Ps. xxxv. 2), where it is *mil'êl*.[17]

For Thou hast smitten all mine enemies : Many times hast Thou delivered me and *smitten mine enemies* : so wilt Thou do now. Or its interpretation may be with regard to this very war and is as we have interpreted (the clause) *and He answereth me out of His holy hill.* And the interpretation of

(upon the) cheek : is, a striking of *the cheek*, and it is a striking in contempt. So also (contemptuously)

Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked : These are those who were proposing to tear him ; and it is an expression of the same form as "*And I brake the jaws of the wicked*" (Job xxix. 17).

9. **To the Lord belongeth salvation :** and as Thou wilt deliver me I will acknowledge it and say, *to the Lord belongeth salvation*, and without Him man shall not be saved.

Thy blessing be upon Thy people. Selah : That *Thy people* may not perish in this war.

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16. *i.e.* on the last syllable. 17. *i.e.* on the penultimate syllable.

PSALM IV

1. **For the Chief Musician: on Neginoth. A Psalm of David:** Our teachers of blessed memory have said (*Shoḥer Ṭôb, ad loc.*) that "this Psalm was uttered in three kinds of praise, in *nissûaḥ* (נצוח), in *niggûn* (נגון), and in *mizmôr* (מזמור)." It is evident that the (person called the) מנצח ("Chief Musician") is the one who was over the singers, and that the Psalms were rendered under the direction of the(se) "Chief Musicians," who assigned them to (certain) players and singers. [This view is supported by the fact that] you nowhere find [as titles] "For the Singer" or "For the Player," but only *For the Chief Musician.* And accordingly we have in the Prayer of Habakkuk (iii. 19) "*For the Chief Musician on my stringed instruments*"; and so the text (1 Chron. xxiii. 4) "*to superintend* (לנצח) *the work of the house of the Lord.*" It is written also (*ibid.* xv. 21) "*with harps set to the Sheminith to lead* (לנצח)." And it is the case that there was a "Chief Musician" over the instrument called *Neginoth* and another over that called *Sheminith.* And the songs and the melodies and the praises were rendered each according to the melody known in connexion with them; for it was a great science and would stimulate the rational soul, and was reckoned in the category of secular sciences. And the instruments which were (used) in the Temple for praise were lutes, lyres, cymbals, trumpets, and a horn. The instruments also were classified according to melodies known in connexion with them. Of the melodies there was that called *Alamoth*, as in the text (1 Chron. xv. 20) and written (Ps. xlvi. 1), "*Set to Alamoth. A Song.*" And there was that called *Neginoth*, and in this the present Psalm was rendered. And there was one of them called *Maskil*, and there was one of them called *Mikhtam.* There was also *Shiggaion*, and there was *Nehiloth*, and there was *Shigionoth*, and there was *Gittith.* One of the instruments was called "Tenstrings,"[1] another "Pipes,"[2] and another "Minnim."[3] And each of these is classified in its

1. Heb. עשור (Ps. xxxiii. 2; xcii. 4). 2. Heb. עוגב (Ps. cl. 4).
3. *i.e.* "strings" (Ps. cl. 4).

melody as it was known to the masters of the science. We find also a text which says (1 Chron. xxiii. 5), "*And four thousand praised the Lord with the instruments I made to praise.*" It is not known, however, whether the instruments were in the hands of those who were actually reciting the Psalm, or whether they acted together—those who sang with the mouth, and opposite them those who played upon (musical) instruments. We find also another text which says (2 Chron. vii. 6), "*And the Levites with the instruments of music of the Lord which David the king had made to give thanks unto the Lord, for His mercy (endureth) for ever, when David praised by their ministry: and the priests sounded the trumpets before them.*" And further it is written (*ibid.* xxix. 28), "*and the singers sang and the trumpeters sounded.*" Now the trumpets alone were in the hands of the priests, as it is written (Num. x. 8), "*and the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets*;" and the rest of the instruments were in the hands of the Levites; and so it is written (2 Chron. xxix. 26), "*And the Levites stood with the instruments of David and the priests with the trumpets.*"

2. **Answer me when I call, O God (Judge) of my righteousness:** It is certain that this Psalm likewise was uttered (by David) in his flight before Absalom; and he says, *Answer me when I call, O God (Judge) of my righteousness*, for Thou knowest that with me is the right, and with him who is against me the wrong and the violence; and Thou, Lord, art Judge over us. For in every instance where אלהים (*'Elōhîm*) occurs it has the meaning "judge," as we have interpreted the verse "*Verily there is a God (Judge) that judges in the earth*" (Ps. lviii. 12). And men who are judges are so called: "*The cause of both parties shall come before the 'Elōhîm (judges)*" (Exod. xxii. 8); "*Then his master shall bring him unto 'Elōhîm (the judges)*" (*ibid.* xxi. 6).[4]

Thou hast set me at large when I was in distress: *Thou hast set me at large* for "Thou shalt set me at large," as we have explained that in the prophetical writings a past tense is used in place of a future, for the thing is as if it had already happened. So the Holy Spirit was making a revelation upon his tongue, and he says *Thou hast set me at large.*

4. Ḳimḥi means that *'Elōhîm* ("God") always connotes the idea of "judge." As one of the divine names it mystically denotes multiplied power (the Almighty), and is associated with the idea of justice and fixed law. The meaning "judge" is specially prominent in those passages where *'Elōhîm* is applied to men: *cf.* Ps. lxxxii. 6; John x. 34 f.

Be gracious unto me and hear my prayer.

3. **O ye sons of men** (בני איש) : He addresses the great ones of Israel who were with Absalom. So "*both low* (בני אדם) *and high* (בני איש)" (Ps. xlix. 3): בני אדם (are) the multitude, בני איש the great ones. So also, "*Art not thou a great man* (איש) *and who is like to thee in Israel?*" (1 Sam. xxvi. 15) ; "*Gideon the son of Joash, the great man* (איש) *of Israel*" (Judges vii. 14).

How long shall my honour—*i.e.* my soul, as he says in the previous Psalm, "*Many say of my soul*"; or the interpretation of *my honour*

be dishonour? is that I am king and ye are putting me to dishonour and making me a fugitive from my kingdom :

Ye love a vain (thing)—a thing that shall not be established : that is, the kingdom of Absalom.

And seek after falsehood. Selah : And this is falsehood, a thing that has no permanence, as (in the passage) (Is. lviii. 11) "*Whose waters fail*[6] *not.*"

4. **But know that the Lord hath set apart** (הפלה) : He hath set aside and separated. So also, "*the Lord shall set apart* (והפלה) *between the cattle of Israel*" (Exod. ix. 4). And its interpretation : He has separated me from all Israel to be king ; on the analogy of "*The Lord separated the tribe of Levi*" (Deut. x. 8). And why? Because He knows me to be

a godly one : The godly is he who does good to his neighbour beyond what the Law requires of him.[6] And with how many of the children of men did David deal thus! For they dealt evilly with him and he dealt well with them ; as it is said of Saul that he confessed to him and said (1 Sam. xxiv. 18) : "*for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil.*" And behold he has separated me

for Himself : and given me the kingdom. How, then, do ye think to steal it from me and to set up another king? And although you see me in distress now, you shall know that

The Lord will hear me when I call unto Him—and bring me out of this trouble.

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5. lit. "play false" (יכובו).

6. lit. *within the line of (strict) justice*, *i.e.* not on the line of strict justice ; in English idiom, "outside the letter of the law" (beyond what the law requires).

5. **Tremble:** The meaning is "fear," as "*and shall tremble and be in anguish*" (Deut. ii. 25). Fear God if ye do not fear me.

and sin not: in still pursuing after and rebelling against me.

Say it in your heart (*i.e.* think) **upon your bed:** for a man upon his bed finds his heart freer from the concerns of the world and then will his intention be pure. And David addresses them: "Consider *in your heart.*" And so the thought of the heart is called "speaking" (as in the text) "*That saith in her heart*" (Is. xlvii. 8). And he says

Be still. Selah: His meaning is: "Be silent, and cease to rebel against me;" for "stillness" has the sense of silence of speech and voice, as "*They kept still for my counsel*" (Job xxix. 21); "*stillness and a voice I heard*" (*ibid.* iv. 16). There is also (a stillness) which is (equivalent to) silence of action and movement, as "*He turneth the storm to stillness*" (Ps. cvii. 29); "*my bowels boil and are not still*" (Job xxx. 27); "*and the sun stood still*" (Josh. x. 13); "*Be still* (*tarry*) *until we come unto you*" (1 Sam. xiv. 9); "*To the still stone*"[7] (Hab. ii. 19), and (other instances) similar to these. And of this meaning is (the sentence) *Be still: Selah*, as though to say: "Cease you from your works." And the great teacher of righteousness, our master Moses ben Maimon,[8] has explained (*Guide for the Perplexed*, Bk. I. 50, 59) that this verse commands men of intelligence and reputation to recognise the truth and the praise of God in their hearts, so that no error of speech shall overtake them. But this is not (derived) from the sense of the Psalm.

6. **Offer the sacrifices of righteousness:** Since you have done evil, behold, you need atonement; *offer* then to the Lord *the sacrifices of righteousness* so as ye repent, and not sacrifices like those of the wicked, of which it is said (Prov. xxi. 27), "*the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination*," for they return to their wickedness after the sacrifices; therefore he says: *the sacrifices of righteousness.*

And put your trust in the Lord: not in your might and the fact that ye are a great multitude, but in the Lord alone shall ye trust. And he connects בטח (*trust*) here with the preposition אֶל (*to*) as equivalent to עַל (*on*); and so, "*Trust in* (אל) *the Lord with all thine heart*" (*ibid.* iii. 5); and "*Trust ye not in* (אל) *lying words*" (Jer. vii. 4).

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7. R.V. "to the dumb stone."
8. *i.e.* Maimonides ("Rambam"), 1135–1204 A.D.

7. **Many (there be that) say**:—viz. those he has spoken of as *sons of men*; and he says concerning them, *many say of my soul*—they say longingly in their rebellion,

Oh that He would shew us prosperity: that the rebellion of Absalom might succeed, and David perish and his son become king. And my evil is their good, and for it they are longing; but Thou,

Lord, lift up (נסה) **the light of Thy countenance upon us**: not according to their purpose. And the word נסה (is written) with *samek* (ס) instead of the (usual) *sin* (שׂ) and is equivalent to נשא. And it is possible to explain it according to the sense of *and put your trust in the Lord*. He says: as for *many* their thought is only for the prosperity of this world, and they are longing for it and saying *Oh that He would shew us prosperity!* while I and those with me say, *Lord, lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us!* All our desire is for the light of Thy countenance for the world to come.

8. **Thou hast put gladness in my heart**: Behold, they requite me evil for good, but, as for me, there was gladness in my heart at their prosperity—that is,

From the time when their corn and wine multiplied: and they are rejoicing at my evil. And the meaning of *Thou hast put* is in the sense of what they have said (Babli, *Yoma* 38*b*, and in other places), "He who comes to be purified is helped."[9] And it is a good way for a man to rejoice in the prosperity of his fellows. And him who walks in a good way God helps and directs: and this is the force of *Thou hast put*.

9. **In peace together would I lay me down and sleep**: I was desiring their prosperity, and still, although they have done me evil, I desire that we may be *in peace together*, I and they, and that if *I lay me down and sleep* I may not have anything to disturb me from sleep, after they return to me.

For Thou, Lord, alone makest me to rest in safety: for I am confident that Thou wilt grant my desire and *wilt make me rest in safety* with them. And the interpretation of *alone* (is): Thou, Lord, only canst do this, and in Thee is my trust and not in another.

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9. "He who comes to purify himself—(Heaven) helps him."

בא לטהר מסייעין אותו

PSALM V

1. **For the Chief Musician : To the Neḥiloth. A Psalm of David.**
I have already explained the meaning of the *Neḥiloth* and other kinds of music in the previous Psalm. Our teacher Hai,[1] of blessed memory, explained the word (*neḥiloth*) from the expression *neḥil* (נחיל), (meaning) "a swarm" of bees, in the words of our sages of blessed memory (Mishnah, *Baba Ḳamma* x. 2). He means that its music was like the buzzing of bees.

This Psalm is also likewise directed against David's enemies, those in Israel who were ill-disposed to him. Our rabbis of blessed memory have said (Midrash, *Shoḥer Ṭōb*, *ad loc.*) that he uttered it against his adversaries Doeg and Ahithophel.

2. **Give ear to my words, O Lord,**
Consider my meditation :
Give ear to what I utter with my mouth and *consider* what I meditate in my heart. Therefore he uses the word *consider* with *meditation*, and *give ear to* with *my words*. He uses (the term) הגיתי ("my meditation"), which is derived from הגה by doubling the second radical, just as (in the verse) "*for the lightning* (חזיז) *of the thunder*" (Job xxxviii. 25), (where חזיז is derived) from חזה.[2]

3. **Hearken unto the voice of my cry :** Make thine ear attentive, for the verb (הקשיבה) is transitive. And so it is written (Prov. ii. 2): "*to incline* (להקשיב) *thine ear unto wisdom*"; "*Thou wilt make attentive thine ear*" (Ps. x. 17). The word is connected with (the prepositions) ל, אל, and ב; and sometimes it is (used) without any connecting letter (at all), as הקשבתי ואשמע, "*I hearkened and heard*" (Jer. viii. 6); מי הקשיב דברו, "*Who hath hearkened to his word?*" (*ibid.* xxiii. 17).

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1. *i.e.* Hai Gaon (998–1038 A.D.), the last of the Geonim or heads of the Babylonian schools at Pumbeditha and Sura. He was the author of works on the Bible and Talmud, and also a poet.
2. This etymology is highly doubtful.

my King: for Thou art a king over me, and I cry unto Thee as men cry unto the king.

and my God (Judge) art Thou, for Thou art my Judge and shalt save me from those who do me evil.

For unto Thee do I pray: and not to another, a deliverer, for there is none beside Thee.

4. **O Lord, in the morning shalt Thou hear my voice:** for in the morning is the time for prayer, before a man engages himself in the business of the world.

In the morning will I order unto Thee my prayer

and will keep watch: and I will wait for Thee to grant me my request and petition.

5. **For Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness:** Why should I watch for Thee? Because I know that Thou wilt have no pleasure in the wicked; if so, Thou wilt have no pleasure in my enemies, for they are evil men, and I am watching for Thee to save me from them; for Thou wilt have pleasure in me and not in them.

There shall not sojourn (with) Thee: (where לא יגרך is equivalent to לא ינור עכך) and so (in the verse) נחלני כאב ("He grew up with me as a father"), where נחלני is equivalent to גדל עמי; and (there are) many such cases.

Evil: *i.e.* an *evil* man. Or *evil* may (here) be a substantive equivalent to "wickedness," which he has just mentioned.

6. **(Mad) fools** (הוללים) **shall not stand before Thine eyes:** The significance of הוללים is sometimes that of folly, as (in the passages) "*And he played the fool in their hands*"[3] (1 Sam. xxi. 14); "*I said it is foolish*" (Eccles. ii. 2); and sometimes it is used with the significance of wickedness,[4] as (in the passage) "*mischievous madness*" (הוללות) (*ibid.* x. 13), and similar instances. And in this sense (is the clause to be taken here)—(*Mad*) *fools shall not stand before Thine eyes*, as he proceeds to say

Thou hatest all workers of iniquity: nevertheless a single class contains them all, for wickedness is not of the way of knowledge

3. E.V. "he feigned himself mad."
4. "Folly" and moral turpitude are closely linked ideas in the Old Testament.

and wisdom. And the interpretation of *before Thine eyes* (is) : like a man who hates another and is unwilling to look him in the face.

7. **Thou shalt destroy them that speak lies :** Thou shalt destroy them from before Thee, and so

The bloodthirsty and deceitful man doth the Lord abhor : for they are abhorred and despised in His eyes. And such is the idiom of the language, to speak at one time directly and at another indirectly.[5]

8. **But as for me, in the multitude of Thy loving-kindness**— they are despised in Thine eyes, but as for me, I will take my stand in Thy sight and before Thee.

I will come into Thine House : *in the multitude of Thy loving-kindness* which I hope for from Thee.

In Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy Temple which is before me. And the interpretation of *toward* (*Thy*) *temple* (is) : because the worshipper of God makes the Temple and the Holy Place (the object) of his longing desire, and worships God as though before it. And the interpretation of *Thine House* and *Thy holy Temple* (is) : the House which contained the Ark.

9. **Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness :** This is my prayer unto Thee, that Thou shouldest lead me *in Thy righteousness*, meaning that Thou shouldest help me to go in the way of righteousness and justice, and lead me in it so that I may not stumble.

Because of my watchful foes : That they may not be able to rejoice over me through my stumbling, *make straight Thy way before my face.* And

my watchful foes (שוררי) is the equivalent of "my enemies," and is derived from (the verb) "*I spy him* (אשוררנו), *but not nigh*" (Num. xxiv. 17), because he is looking for evil, as (in the verse) "*Saul eyed David*" (1 Sam. xviii. 9). And this prayer is that He (God) should deliver him from faults and from deliberate sins, as he says (in the verses Ps. xix. 13, 14) : "*Clear me from hidden* (*faults*)*; moreover, from deliberate sins restrain Thy servant.*"

5. *i.e.* 2nd and 3rd persons interchange.

Make Thy way plain before my face: הישר[6] ("make plain") has the *yodh* of the first radical pronounced, unlike verbs in which the first radical is quiescent; and a similar case to it is היצא אתך ("*Bring forth with thee*," Gen. viii. 17). And *Kethib* has *waw* on the analogy of verbs with the first radical quiescent; and so with the *pathah* of the second radical (הישר הושר), as also (in the verse): "*Cause Thy mighty ones to come down* (הנחת), *O Lord*" (Joel iv. 11).

10. **For there is nothing straightforward in his mouth:** That is the reason why he says *because of my watchful foes*, for they are men of such a kind that there is no *straightforwardness* in the mouth (even) of one of them, but they make themselves appear to be friends.

Their inward part is very wickedness: meaning they are devising evil in their heart.

An open sepulchre is their throat;

They make smooth their tongue: for he who is not on his guard against them and listens to them when they make smooth their tongue and flatter and appear as friends will fall into their pit (sepulchre); and this is the intention of their heart, which is for evil. And he attributes (the uttering of) words to the throat, as (in the passage): "*Let the high praises of God be in their throat*" (Ps. cxlix. 6), for some letters are pronounced in the throat. Further, all speech has its beginning from the throat, for the voice proceeds from the throat and makes speech possible to the mouth. Moreover, because the throat is open to the inside, which he compares to a sepulchre, he says *their throat.*

And the word נכוחה (*straightforwardness*) is a feminine adjective, but the substantive[7] is wanting, and we must supply (in thought)[8] אמרה ("utterance") or דברה ("word"); and so "*his meat* (m.) *is fat*" [בראה fem., *i.e.* "a fat thing," Hab. i. 16]: "*like a flock* (*of ewes*) *that are shorn*" [lit. "of the shorn ones," הקצובות, Cant. iv. 2]; "*he answereth roughly*" [lit. "rough things," עזות, Prov. xviii. 23]; and similar passages.

11. **Make them miss the mark** (האשימם), **O God:** There are some who interpret this[9] from the meaning of שממה ("desolation", and

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6 This is the Kerî reading (הישר). The *Kĕthîb* is הושר.

7 lit. "that which is qualified" (*sc.* by the adjective).

8 lit. "and its explanation" (its sense made explicit) is:

9 *sc.* the word האשימים.

(make) אשם and שמם of one meaning.[10] But it is admissible to explain it in the (primary) sense of אשם; and its interpretation (will then be): *Make them miss the mark* in their counsel, meaning, Let not what they purposed to do against me be possible or happen. And it occurs (here) in the sense of אשם taken as equivalent to חטא, as in ולא יחטא ("And would not *miss the mark*," Judges xx. 16). And this is what (he means when) he says:

Let them fall from their counsels:

In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, for they have rebelled against Thee—in that they hate me, and Thou hast commissioned me to be king, and *they have* rebelled against Thy words. (The word) מרו (*they have rebelled*) is here used in the same sense as in "*Ye have rebelled* (מריתם) *against My word*" (Num. xxvii. 14).

12. **So shall all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice;**

They shall ever ring out their joy—just the opposite of the enemies, who do not trust in Thee; and when Thou shalt thrust them out those who trust in Thee shall rejoice. And the sense of

and Thou shalt defend them (is): that Thou wilt be over them as a tent, so that the enemy shall not harm them.

Yea, let those that love Thy name be joyful in Thee: The *'ayin* (of ויעלצו)[11] and the *lamed* are pointed with *sheva.*

13. **For Thou shalt bless the righteous, O Lord:** Then shall they rejoice in Thee when Thou dost bless the righteous and thrust out the wicked.

Thou shalt compass him with favour as with a shield: As with a shield which compasses a man round about, so wilt Thou compass the righteous with Thy favour. The word תעטרנו ("*Thou shalt compass him*") is the Kal conjugation[12] (as עוטרים in the passage "*compassing David and his men*," 1 Sam. xxiii. 26).

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10. Then render: "Destroy Thou them" (so *PBV*).
11. So Masoretic Text. Dr. Schiller-Szinessy remarks that in the MS. of Ḳimḥi's Commentary which he was using for this edition the word is pointed יְעַלְצוּ.
12. The Piel = "crown."

PSALM VI

1. **For the Chief Musician, with Neginoth, on the Sheminith. A Psalm of David.** Already we have explained the sense of *Neginoth* and *Sheminith* and the other kinds of musical instruments in the Psalm *Answer me when I call* (Ps. iv.). There are some (Targum *ad loc.*) who interpret *Sheminith* as a lyre which had eight strings, and the Psalm as being recited to the accompaniment of this music. The Haggadic interpretation (Babli, *Menaḥoth* 43 *b*) (applies it) to circumcision, which was performed on the eighth day, but this is far-fetched. This Psalm possibly was uttered by David with reference to his sickness; it is also possible likewise that it was uttered in the language of anyone crushed by sickness, for David composed many of the Psalms which combine prayer and supplication that they might be suitable for any suppliant; and such, I think, is the case in this Psalm. And some say (Ibn Ezra *ad loc.*) that it was uttered with reference to the Exile, for Israel in exile was like those who are sick and crushed.

2. **O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger:** If Thou dost *rebuke me* for mine iniquity, let it *not* be *in Thine anger*. He means "gently," so that I may be able to bear it; as Jeremiah the Prophet says (Jer. x. 24): "*O Lord, correct me, but with judgment*," etc.

Neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure: A duplication of the sense in different words in accordance with the idiom of the language.

3. **Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am feeble (withered):** אֻמְלַל (*feeble, withered*) has the force of an adjective although written with a *pathaḥ*;[1] and a similar example is (the passage):

1. *i.e.* אֻמְלַל is to be regarded as a verbal adjective or participle = מְיאֻמָּלָל R.V. "I am withered away."

"*A heart deceived* (הוּחַל) *hath turned him aside*" (Is. xliv. 20);[2] and it (אִחֵל) has the sense of "uprooting" and "cutting off," as (in the passage): "*And she that hath many children is withered away*" (languisheth)[3] (1 Sam. ii. 5); "*these feeble*[4] *Jews*" (Neh. iii. 34); "*she that hath borne seven is withered away*" (languisheth)[3] (Jer. xv. 9); and (other) similar passages.

O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed: He means his body. He says *my bones*, because they are the foundation of the body; or he speaks of the pain of his limbs.

4. **My soul also is sore vexed:** *My bones are vexed and my soul also is sore vexed* with respect to my fear and anxiety that I shall die from this sickness.

And Thou (ואת), written (*Kĕthîb*) without *hē* (ה), but to be read (*Kĕrî*) with *hē* (ה); but it is without significance, for it is found (written) without *hē*; thus (for example): "*And if Thou* (אַתָּה) *deal thus with me*" (Num. xi. 15).

O Lord, how long—wilt Thou crush me with sickness and not heal me?

5. **Return** (שׁוּבָה): The accent is *milra'*, of which this is one of five instances.

O Lord, deliver my soul: and its interpretation (is): Turn from Thy fierce wrath upon me, and, Turn, *deliver my soul* that I die not of this sickness.

Save me for Thy loving-kindness' sake—not for my righteousness, for I know that I am guilty.

6. **For in death there is no remembrance of Thee:**

In Sheol who shall give Thee thanks?

If I die, I shall not remember Thee in death, neither shall I give Thee thanks; and if Thou healest me, I will give Thee thanks before the eyes of all. As Hezekiah (Is. xxxviii. 18) says: "*For Sheol cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee*," etc.; and David says (Ps. cxviii. 17): "*I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.*" For the body after the departure of the spirit is as a dumb stone, and it descends to Sheol; but the spirit

2. *i.e.* הוּחַל, regarded as Pual of חָלַל (see Gesenius, *Lehrgebäude*, p. 316), is a shortened form of the participle = מְחוּלָל.

3. *i.e.* has become unfruitful through being cut off from marital intercourse, just as a plant uprooted and torn away from the soil withers.

4. "Feeble," *i.e.* cut off from all resources.

ascends and praises and glorifies for ever without ceasing. But the righteous longs to live to do the will of God while he is yet alive in order to increase the reward of his soul in the world to come.

7. **I am weary with my groaning;**
Every night make I my bed to swim; אַשְׂחֶה
I melt my couch with my tears.

For I groan and am anxious on account of my sickness and weep until *I make my bed swim every night*, because at night the sickness is grievous, and a man laments and weeps on account of his sickness. Or he weeps at night because the household is asleep and no one sees him. And lo! he is weary with groaning and with weeping. And as for what he says: *I make to swim* and *I water*—it is by way of exaggeration and hyperbole.[4] And the interpretation of אַשְׂחֶה (*I make to swim*) is (to be derived) from (such passages) as: "*as he that swimmeth* (הַשֹּׂחֶה) *spreadeth out his hands to swim* (לִשְׂחוֹת)" (Is. xxv. 11); or from the Targum (rendering) of "*and he washed* (וירחץ)" (Gen. xliii. 31), which is ואסחי.[5] And the interpretation of אַמְסֶה (*I melt*) is (to be gathered) from (such passages) as: "*they made the heart of the people melt* (המסיו)" (Josh. xiv. 8); "*and like a moth Thou makest his beauty to melt away* (ותמס)" (Ps. xxxix. 12). These (instances) are from verbs *lāmed hē* of the *hifil* conjugation. And there are many (cases) of double *'ayin* verbs of this signification, as: "*They have made my heart to melt* (הֵמַסּוּ)" (Deut. i. 28); "*and the heart of the people melted* (וַיָּמֶס)" (Josh. vii. 8).

8. **Decayed:** (The word) עָשְׁשָׁה ("is moth-eaten") is of the same origin (as עָשׁ, "moth"; *cf.*) "*the moth* (עָשׁ) *shall devour them*" (Is. l. 9), as if he had said "decays."

because of vexation is mine eye: And the reason why I weep is *because of* the *vexation* with which I am vexed against my enemies, who rejoice at my sickness. And the interpretation of (the word rendered)

it is removed (יצחקה) may be gathered from "*And the rock is removed* (יעתק) *out of its place*" (Job xiv. 18). The expressions *decayed* ("moth-eaten") and *removed* (ועשׁשה ויצחקה) are used hyperbolically. And the explanation of

5. On this interpretation the rendering would be: "Every night wash I my bed," etc. (*cf. PBV*).

with (ב) **all my adversaries** is "on account of" (בעבור) *all my adversaries*. And there are some (Targum, Rashi *ad loc.*) who explain עתקה in the sense of "is grown old (נת ישנה)," in accordance with the Targum rendering of ישן ("the old store") in Lev. xxv. 22 by עתיק.

9. **Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity;**
For the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.

He said this on recovering from his sickness, or even during his sickness; and (then) he is speaking of the future by the Holy Spirit. And every sick man who prays by this Psalm is able to say this, for he is confident that God will hear his prayer if he prays with a broken and contrite heart.

10. **The Lord hath heard my supplication;**
The Lord will receive my prayer.

"*He will*" as though "*He has received.*" And the reason for *He will* (is): on this and every occasion when my prayer comes to Him, He will accept it with favour.

11. **All my enemies shall be ashamed and sore vexed:** When I am healed *all my enemies* who were looking for my death *shall be ashamed and vexed.*

They shall return, they shall be ashamed in a moment: When they see that their scheme has not come about, *they shall return* to me to be at peace with me, and in that *moment* there shall be shame to them because of me.

PSALM VII

1. **Shiggayon of David:** We have already explained that *Shiggayon* is a kind of music. And so it says in the Prayer of Habakkuk (iii. 1) "*Set to Shigyonoth.*"

which he sang unto the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjamite: Our teachers of blessed memory have said (Targum *ad loc.* and Babli, *Moed Katon* 16 *b*, with some variation, that this Psalm was uttered concerning Saul. And he calls him *Cush* because he was beautiful, as "*the Cushite woman*" (Num. xii. 1), which is interpreted in the Targum as "*the beautiful woman*"; and such is the opinion of all the exegetes. And they say that he calls him "Cushite"—as a Cushite is one who does not change his skin, so Saul did not change in his hatred towards David. And in this way it is said (Jer. xiii. 23), "*Can the Cushite change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also be able to do good who are accustomed to do evil.*" And the learned R. Abraham ben Ezra, of blessed memory, rejected this interpretation, for he asks, How should anyone say of the Lord's anointed, *Behold, he travaileth with iniquity* (v. 15)? And he says there was one of the children of Benjamin who hated him, and his name was *Cush.* And his objection to *Behold, he travaileth with iniquity* as being said of Saul does not hold. Why should he not say so? Behold, did (not) David say to his very face: "*Out of the wicked proceedeth wickedness*" (1 Sam. xxiv. 14)? And did he (not) say to him: "*And the Lord avenge thee of me*" (*ibid.* xxiv. 13)? And in the Haggadic exposition (*Shoher Tōb, ad loc.*) (it says that) he surnames him *Cush*, because it is written (Koheleth x. 20): "*Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought.*"[1] And the Haggadic interpretation is correct. You see that all agree that the Psalm was spoken of Saul, apart from the (one) interpreter mentioned.[2] And as regards the expression *concerning* (על דברי, lit. "concerning the matters of"), (it is used) because the matters and affairs which he had in connexion with him were numerous. Many times also he

1. *i.e.* he disguises the reference to Saul by using the name *Cush.*
2. *i.e.* Abraham ben Ezra.

had purposed to slay him, as it is written (in Scripture). The first occasion, when he became his son-in-law, he purposed to make him fall into the hand of the Philistines; afterwards he purposed to slay him in his house; and when he stood (ministering) before him he hurled the javelin at him many times; and (even) after he had parted from him (he acted) in a like manner also when he was pursuing him. And the interpretation of על דברי is "*concerning the matter of*" in accordance with (the use of the expression in such a passage as): "*concerning* (על דבר) *the frogs*" (Exod. viii. 8), and similar passages.

2. **O Lord my God, in Thee do I put my trust:**
Save me from all them that pursue me, and deliver me:

In Thee do I put my trust and not in the help of man, therefore *save me from all them that* are allied with Saul who *pursue me.*

3. **Lest he tear my soul like a lion,**
Rending in pieces while there is none to deliver.

This could not be said of any other enemy of David except Saul, who was king; and of him it is said, *Rending in pieces while there is none to deliver.* And he says *as a lion*, because he is the mightiest among the beasts, and is called king over them, and if he rends *there is none to deliver.* And (the sense of) פרק (*rending in pieces*) is to be gathered from the sense (of the expression) in "*and thou shalt break in pieces* (ופרקת) *his yoke*" (Gen. xxvii. 41).

4. **O Lord my God, if I have done this;**
If there be iniquity in my hands:

If I have done this—that he does to me. And what this is he specifies: *if I have requited evil unto him that was at peace with me*, if I have done by my hand evil to a man in iniquity or in violence.

5. **If I have requited evil unto him that was at peace with me:**
If I have requited him evil who was at peace with me as he does me who was at peace with him, and was his son-in-law, and fought his battles—and he requites me evil in return for good!

But (no)! I have delivered him that without cause was my enemy:
Not merely *have I* not *requited evil unto him* (*who was*) *at peace with me*, but (on the contrary) I have delivered him who *without cause* was *my enemy.* But to no purpose did I rescue him

—as indeed he rescued Saul from the power of Abishai, who, had he not withheld him, was about to kill him, as he said: "*Let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time*" (1 Sam. xxvi. 8); and so of the occasion when he was in the cave it is said: "*so David checked his men with these words and suffered them not to rise against Saul*" (1 Sam. xxiv. 7). And the *waw* in ואחלצה ("but [lit. *and*] I have delivered") is like the *waw* (in ונבדיך in the verse) "*but* (*and*) *thy servants came to buy food*" (Gen. xlii. 10), of which (passage) the interpretation is: "It is not, my lord, as thou sayest, that we are spies; *but* thy servants are come to buy food."

6. **The enemy doth pursue my soul:** This word (יִרְדֹּף, "pursue") is a combination of the *Kal* and dageshed (*i.e. piel*) conjugations; from the *Kal* is said יִרְדֹּף, and from the *piel* is said יְרַדֵּף; and the word is compounded of these two (forms). And the meaning of the compound (form) is that the enemy pursues him himself and pursues him with respect to others when he bids others pursue him; so Saul was pursuing him (ורדפו) and chasing him (כרדפו) with reference to Israel. And he says *my soul*, for he does not pursue me to bind me with a cord, but to kill me—as, indeed, he proposed so many times to slay him with his own hand.

And should he overtake he will tread my life to the earth: And if he should overtake me he will *tread my life to the earth*, for he will give me no rest till he slay me. And the word "if" is lacking, as (similarly, Isaiah xxx. 20): "*And the Lord will give you the bread of adversity and water of affliction*," which is to be interpreted "*if He give*"; and (another instance) "*and thou hast refused to let him go*" (Exod. iv. 23) = "*and if thou refusest*." The *waw* in וְיִרְמֹס is equivalent (in meaning) to the ف *rapheh* in Arabic;[3] or its interpretation (may be) he is thinking within himself, as he pursues me, that he will overtake me *and tread my life to the earth and lay my glory in the dust.*

And lay my glory in the dust. Selah: *My glory* is "my soul," and his plan is to lay my glory in the dust. And although at a man's death his soul does not lie in the dust, the expression is figurative, as, "*My soul cleaveth to the dust*" (Ps. cxix. 25). Or it is in accordance with the thought of the enemy, for he thinks there is no resurrection for my soul, because he considers me a wicked man and a murderer. And the word *Selah* I have ex-

3. *i.e.* ف which in Arabic is used as a strong conjunction in certain cases = "then."

plained (Ps. iii. 3) to be a raising of the voice in the music ; and it has no (special) significance in the context here, nor is it necessary to explain it on every occurrence.

7. **Arise, O Lord, in Thine anger :** קומה, accented *milra'*, with the accent on the *mem*. He says : *Rise, O Lord, in Thine anger* against those who pursue me to take my life.

Lift up Thyself in rage (lit. *rages*, pl.) **against my adversaries :** In Thy rage (sing.) against them, as he says, *in Thine anger* ; or its interpretation is "*against the rage*" (pl.) which my adversaries have against me, do Thou *lift up Thyself* against them and deliver me from their hand.

Rouse Thyself for me to the judgment Thou hast commanded : *Rouse Thyself on my behalf in the judgment* which *Thou hast commanded* concerning me : that is, the *judgment* of the Kingdom.

8. **And the congregation of the peoples let it compass Thee about : And over it return Thou on high.**

He speaks of *congregation* (עדה) in a general, and of *peoples* (לאמים) in a specific, sense. The *congregation* is the congregation of Israel, which includes them all ; the *peoples* (לאמים) are the twelve tribes of Israel. And they are called לאמים, *i.e.* peoples (עמים) and nations (גוים), as Isaac said to Jacob : "*that thou mayest be a company of peoples* (קהל עמים)" (Gen. xxviii. 3). And so God says to Jacob (*ibid.* xxxv. 11) : "*A nation and a company of nations* (קהל גוים) *shall be of thee.*" So you see he calls them "peoples" (עמים) and "nations" (גוים) relative to the tribes ; and he calls them a "company" (קהל) and a "congregation" (עדה), for the twelve tribes formed one company and one congregation. If he were using the word לאמים ("peoples") of the nations of the world, he would not have made use of the expression *congregation* (ועדת), for a single congregation could not comprise them (all), because every single people (לאום) forms a congregation by itself in its own sight. Therefore the Nazarenes (Christians) have erred in interpreting the verse of Jesus, and explaining *and the congregation of the peoples* of the nations who have been converted to his faith, and who say that (the words) *and over it return on high* is an indication that he would come down (from heaven) to assume human flesh. Now say to them, in the first place, that the Psalm *ex* Psalm explains in its title about whom it was spoken ; and then that the prayer would be in vain if he were God, while if his prayer had reference to the flesh (the Incarnation), it was unavailing. And if they say to you that such was his will that he

should be hanged—(reply) then, if so, it was foolish that he should pray for something he did not desire. And add that the greater part of the Psalm speaks of one enemy, while he had many enemies.

And regarding the assumption of human flesh (the Incarnation), I have already written in the second Psalm how you should answer them. Now, according to our exposition, the interpretation of this verse will be as follows. It was known in Israel that David had been anointed to be king, and it was known likewise also that Samuel had anointed him at God's direction. And in the place where he had been anointed all recognised that Samuel had not done this of his own mind, for when Eliab, (David's) eldest brother, came he said, "*Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him*" (1 Sam. xvi. 6), for he thought that he was to be the king until the Lord said to him : "*Look not on his countenance nor on the height of his stature*" (*ibid.* v. 7). And when the youngest came God said to him, "*Arise, anoint him, for this is he*" (*ibid.* v. 12). If so, he who pursued after David was as though he pursued after God, and he who surrounded him to capture him as one who surrounded God, who is blessed. And because of this he says, *Let it compass thee about*, after the manner of the prophet (Zech. ii. 12), who says : "*for he that toucheth you is as one who toucheth the apple of his eye.*" And when he says, *And over it return Thou on high*, it is as he has (just before) said, *Arise and lift up Thyself.* And it is all figurative, for when God forgives man's transgression, it is as though He should descend from His place of power and His habitation of judgment. And when He visits man's iniquity and judges him, then it is as though He should rise and lift Himself up and return on high to the place of judgment. And so it is said of the vengeance on Pharaoh (Exod. xv. 1), "*for He is highly exalted.*"

9. **The Lord ministereth judgment to the peoples :** *i.e.* Israel, as I have explained לאמים (in the previous verse) ; and the interpretation of דין (*ministereth judgment*) (is) that he will exact my vengeance and my judgment from them. And this is what he says :

Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity be it unto me : for as for me, there is no iniquity in me nor have I sinned against them that they should hate me. He does not speak of all of them, but of the wicked among them who hated David without cause. And of them he says, *let the wickedness of the wicked bring to an end* ; for the greater part of Israel loved David ; for he it was who used to bring them out and lead them in while he was with Saul ; and

they were acting under compulsion while they pursued him at the command of Saul. Also of the tribe of Benjamin many loved him, as is written (1 Chron. xii. 1, 2) of those "*who came to David to Ziklag.*"

10. **Oh let the wickedness of the wicked bring to an end:** He says: *the wickedness* which *the wicked* plan and do, may it *bring them to an end* and destroy them.

but establish Thou (the) righteous: *And the righteous—Thou wilt establish* his way and his plan, and support him. And he says this of himself and of the righteous who were in Israel.

For it is the righteous God who trieth the hearts and reins: He who *tries* the *hearts* and knows the thoughts of man knows[4] the righteous and the wicked; for many of the sons of men make a show of being good when they are not so. And He is a *righteous God*—he means One who judges with equity, and assigns to everyone according to his ways and his thoughts, for He knows all.

11. **My shield is upon God:** He might have said, *My shield is God.* What, then, is the significance of עַל, *upon*? Only that my reliance and stay is God, who will be *my shield*, for He is

A deliverer of the upright of heart.

12. **God is a righteous Judge:** as (in the verse) *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness* (*supra*, v. 9); and its interpretation (is): *God judges* the *righteous* according to his righteousness and the wicked according to his wickedness, and this is what he means when he says:

Yea, a God that is provoked every day: as though to say, He judges the righteous, and He judges him who provokes *God every day*, when he repents not of his wickedness. And this is what he means below (by the words) *if he turn not—if* (אִם) being used in the place of כִּי (*when*), as: "*When* (אִם) *the jubile shall be*" (Num. xxxvi. 4), where it stands in the place of כִּי or כַּאֲשֶׁר (*when*). And by *every day* he means "continually." And how was Saul *provoking* God? Because he was despising God's work and word, for he knew that David had been anointed as king by the command of God to succeed him, and (yet) he pursued him every day to kill him. You see he was planning every day to bring

4. *i.e.* discriminates between.

God's word to naught. And, moreover, David was innocent and had not sinned against him, and he wished to shed innocent blood. And, further, because he had sworn solemnly[5] that he would not slay him. And for all these reasons it was right that He (God) should be spoken of as *provoked.*

13. **If he will not turn (and) whets his sword:** We have already explained the meaning as depending upon (the clause) above. And he says: *when he* (the wicked man) *will not turn and whets his sword* to slay me.

He hath bent his bow and made it ready to shoot at me; as though to say, I am near death every day, as one who stands in front of the bent bow.

14. **He hath also prepared him the instruments of death;**

And arrows for the pursuers doth he provide: *For himself* and those that *pursue* with him after me *he has prepared and provided arrows* and instruments of death to kill me. And some explain ולו, *for himself*, as equivalent to בעבורו (*on his own account*), meaning "on account of his own life," as though saying, the arrows which he has prepared *him* are against his own life, for he shall die by them. And דלקים (*pursuers*) is used as (in the text): "*that thou hast so hotly pursued* (דלקה) *after me*" (Gen. xxxi. 36).

15. **Behold, he travaileth with iniquity;**

Yea, he hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

He compares the thoughts of the heart with conception, and says their issuing in speech or conduct is like the pangs of a woman at childbirth. If so, the comparison is between speech and birth-pains, and (between) conduct and childbearing. And he says that he speaks evil, because he has conceived it in his heart and brought it forth in his mouth for execution. And *iniquity* and *mischief* and *falsehood* have all one meaning, though the words are different.

16. **He hath digged a pit, and graven it out:** repeating the idea in different words. And he says that he *hath digged a pit* to cause me to fall into it, but he shall fall into it himself. He prophesies that Saul shall die by the sword. And he says:

And hath fallen into the ditch which he maketh: a past tense in place of a future, as we have explained.

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5. lit. *as the Lord liveth.*

17. **His iniquity shall return on his own head:** The treachery he has acted in his pursuit of me *shall return on his own head*,

And his violence shall come down upon his own pate: a repetition of the idea with a change of terms.

18. **I will give thanks unto the Lord according to His righteousness:** And then *I will give thanks unto the Lord* according to *His righteousness* which He has shewn me.

And I will sing praises[6] **to the Name of the Lord Most High:** for He is *Most High* over all, and rules over all, and will deal with His creatures according to His good pleasure.

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6. Or, *make melody*.

PSALM VIII

1. **For the Chief Musician: set to the Gittith. A Psalm of David.** We have expounded already above (Ps. iv. 1) that *Gittith* is a kind of music.[2] And there are those who say that David composed and recited (the Psalm) when he was in Gath,[3] while others say (Ibn Ezra) that he gave it to the sons of Obed Edom the Gittite. This Psalm also is a hymn and rendering of praise and thanks to God, and a recounting of His acts of power.

2. **O Lord, our Sovereign Lord:** for Thou art Lord of the created things, those above and those below.

How Excellent is Thy Name: Equivalent to *How Excellent* art Thou! For His Name is He, and He is His Name. *Name* (here) is the Tetragrammaton,[1] and is not a common noun; and it is *Excellent.*

in all the earth! He means to say: Thy power is seen *in all the earth*; whether in the inhabited parts, or in the desert, or in the sea—*in all the earth* Thy might is seen; but the supreme glory and mightiest power are visible in the heavens, for the earth is but a tiny thing in comparison with the heavens, being like the point in the centre of the circle.

Who hast set Thy glory over the heavens: The word תְּנָה (*set*) is the infinitive in place of (the perfect) נָתַתָּה (*hast set*), for the infinitive is used in place of a past tense, as (in the text) "*calveth and forsaketh*" (Jerem. xiv. 5), where the infinitive עָזוֹב is equivalent to עָזְבָה, and other instances besides; and also in place of a future and present participle, as we have expounded in the book *Mikhol* in the grammatical section thereof. And the meaning of the verse is this: *How Excellent is Thy Name in all the earth!* And *Excellent* inasmuch as Thou hast set *Thy glory over the heavens.* And the interpretation of the word *glory* (הוֹד) is "might and splendour." And it is possible to explain *Who hast set Thy glory*

1. *i.e.* the Divine Name *Jehovah*, which in its Hebrew form consists of four letters (יהוה).

over the heavens as the reason why *Thy Name is Excellent in all the earth.* His meaning (then) is: because Thou hast invested the higher (elements)[2] with power to control the lower; for the earth and all that it contains, the seas and all therein—all are in the control of the higher (elements).[2]

3. **Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast laid the foundation of strength:** The first of the distinguishing marks in man after his coming into the (light and) air of the world is the power to suck. It is needful that man should confess the Creator and recognise His might and power on account of His works that are visible in heaven and in earth; and also from the constitution of his body, which is created from a drop of seed which turns to blood, and from that grows little by little until the limbs are perfectly formed and it comes forth into the (light and) air of the world. He has already made mention of this in the Psalm "*O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known*" (cxxxix. *infra*). In the present Psalm he says that the wonders of the Creator and His loving-kindness to man are to be recognised from the moment of his first coming into the (light and) air of the world, and from his early infancy.[3] It is for this reason that he uses the word יסדת (*Thou hast laid the foundation*); for, just as יסוד (*foundation*) is the beginning of the building, so the suckling period is the beginning of the (power to) recognise the loving-kindness of the Creator towards man after his coming into the (light and) air of the world, because the Holy One—Blessed be He!—has made for him in the breasts an incision like the eye-hole of a fine needle. It is not wider, for if it were wider, the milk would flow forth in a stream without sucking, and too much would come into his mouth, so that he would be choked by it; and if it were smaller than it is, sucking would be difficult to the child and his lips would become painful. Everything, however, is in due proportion and measure. Further, He has distinguished man from the rest of the creatures in that He has put his mother's teats in the place of understanding,[4] as our Rabbis of blessed memory have remarked (Babli, *Berakhoth* 10 *a*). It is for this reason that he says: *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast laid the foundation of strength*, that man may be able to see that all is within the design of a Designer,[5] and not, as the enemies of the Lord say, that everything happens by nature and chance without the direction of a Director and the design of a Designer.[5] And this is the meaning of what he says next:

2. Or, "intelligences."
3. lit. *from his sucking, i.e.* suckling period.
4. *i.e.* near the heart.
5. lit. *the intention of an Intender.*

Because of Thine adversaries,
That Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger:

Although this loving-kindness is to be seen also in like manner in the case of the beasts and living creatures, to man God has given understanding and discernment to recognise God's work and to confess Him and praise Him for all; and all of them have been created for his (man's) use. Such being the case, it is incumbent upon him to reflect, and to recognise the work of God, and to confess Him in everything. And the learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra has expounded (*ad loc.*) that he speaks so "on account of man's being honoured above all the lower creatures, for from the time that the child begins to speak (and this is the meaning of *out of the mouth of babes*), then the spirit, by reason of his constitution, begins to receive strength until it discerns the power of its Creator by a deliberate act of judgment,[6] for the soul is strengthened day after day; and this is the meaning of *Thou hast laid the foundation of strength.* And the meaning of *because of Thine adversaries* (is) to bring to naught the words of the deniers, who say there is no God." And our teacher Moses ha-Cohen ben Giḳtilla[7] has expounded thus: *out of the mouth of babes*, though they cannot speak with their mouths, (yet) in themselves they teach of the multitude of Thy loving-kindnesses, for Thou dost sustain them and makest them to grow in their bodily development.[8]

4. **When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,**
The moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained:

He does not mention the sun. Some say that (David) uttered this Psalm at night, at a time when he was considering the moon and stars, and discerning the wonders of the Creator. Others also say (Ibn Ezra, *ad loc.*) that in the daytime only the sun is seen, while at night a very great host is seen. It is for this reason,

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6. lit. *by the weighing of his mind* (or *opinion*).
7. Rabbi Moses b. Samuel ha-Cohen ibn Giḳtilla, famous in the provinces of Grammar—Ibn Ezra calls him "the greatest grammarian"—and Exegesis in the latter part of the eleventh century, was born at Cordova and lived at Saragossa and in the south of France. His grammatical works, including translations of Ḥayyuj have not survived. There are numerous quotations in Ibn Ezra from commentaries on Isaiah, the Minor Prophets, and the Psalms, some of which he held to date from the Exile. He wrote on Job, probably on the Pentateuch and Earlier Prophets, and possibly on Canticles.
8. lit. *in their body in length and breadth.*

then, that he makes no mention of the sun. And others again say (*ibid.* in the name of others) that when he said *Who hast set Thy glory over the heavens* he hinted at the sun in this, for it is the great creation *par excellence*. And he says *When I consider Thy heavens* as though meaning: "When I consider Thy great creations in the world, and reflect upon human affairs, then I stand amazed." So he says:

5. **What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?**
And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?

What is man! is the antithesis of *How Excellent is Thy Name!* for the latter expression is intended to magnify, but this to depreciate. He says, *When I consider Thy heavens, the moon and the stars*, great creations and intelligences as they are, (I exclaim) *What is man!* that Thou dost remember him and hast imparted to him some of the glory of the higher incorporeal intelligences; for even in the case of those that are corporeal I see their great bodily size and relative superiority, and that man is as nothing compared with them. And he says, *the work of Thy fingers*, and also *which Thou hast ordained*, to confute the scoffers who say the world is eternal;[9] therefore he says *work* and *Thou hast ordained*, for Thou didst make them all new.[10] And he says: *I will consider* of *Thy heavens*, although only the nearest is visible to us, because they are concentric up to the eighth, which is the sphere of the Zodiac, and because they are all transparent, as an object in a glass vessel which is visible from outside. And the learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra, of blessed memory, has written that the Psalmist says *Thy fingers* because the fingers are ten in number and the spheres are ten—seven firmaments containing the seven planets, the sphere of the Zodiac, the ninth sphere above that of the Zodiac, and the tenth the Throne of Glory. *What is man that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that Thou visitest him?* repeating the idea with a change of terms. Or he means to say by *that Thou art mindful of him*, that Thou didst remember him at his creation and didst impart to him some of Thy glory. And *Thou visitest him* —all the days of his life Thou watchest over him and his deeds to reward every man according to his ways.

9. *i.e.* matter is eternal. This question was much discussed by the Jewish Philosophers of the Middle Ages. See *JE*, *s.v. Creation* (iv. 336 f.).

10. *i.e.* didst create them *ex nihilo*.

6. **For Thou hast made him but little lower than Elohim :**—that is, the angels—in that the spirit of man is of the (same) quality as that of the angels, which is incorporeal just as they are incorporeal ; and the inferiority consists in the fact of its (*i.e.* man's spirit) being (lodged) in a body.

And crownest him with glory and honour by the higher spirit which Thou hast placed in him. And by it

7. **Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands :** *i.e.* the inferior beings. Or the meaning of the expression may include the higher ones also ; and the dominion then consists in his knowing by his understanding the movement of the spheres and the stars.

Thou hast put all things under his feet : The lower (beings) are all under him, as it says (Gen. ix. 2) : "*And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every fowl of the air.*"

8. **Flocks and cattle :** The *aleph* of צאן (*flocks*) is elided in צֹנָה, and the *hē* of צנה is changed for *aleph*, as is seen in the word לצנאכם (*for your flocks*) (Num. xxxii. 24). And he says *flocks and cattle* because they grow up with him, and are serviceable for his work and for his food and for his clothing. And *the flocks* include sheep and goats, and *the cattle* (אלפים) are the oxen. And he says

all of them with reference to the rest of the animals that grow up with him—the horses and asses and camels. And he says

And also beasts of the field : meaning the wild creatures of the field. And he adds *And also*, for also over them, that do not grow up with him about his dwelling, he has dominion through his understanding and his cunning devices against them. And he says further :

9. **Fowl of heaven and fish of the sea :** He says : Even over those which are not in the earth with him, as the fowl which flies in the air, and the fishes which swim in the waters, he rules over all and snares them by his cunning devices. And further, by his understanding and his cunning devices

He passes over the paths of the sea : in that he makes ships and *passes* in them *over the paths of the sea.*

10. **O Lord, our Sovereign Lord,**

How Excellent is Thy Name in all the earth! He returns once more to praise when he has finished the recital of the loving-kindnesses which He (God) shews towards man, and the power He has given him over all; and because, though he is small and of no account in comparison with the great creatures on high, he is their equal in understanding. (And so) he returns to praise and says, *O Lord, our Sovereign Lord*, etc.

PSALM IX

1. **For the Precentor : 'al mûth labbēn : A Psalm of David.** The majority of the interpreters (Rabbi Dunash the Levite[1] and Ibn Ezra) say that David uttered it with reference to one of his enemies who died, one of the princes of the heathen, who oppressed Israel and whose name was *Labben*; and that when he died David uttered this Psalm. Some also say (Ibn Ezra, *ad loc.*) that Labben (לבן) is an inversion of Nabal (נבל), and they say that David uttered this Psalm when Nabal the Carmelite died. But this is very far-fetched; for the subject-matter of the Psalm tells of a man who did evil to Israel, while Nabal did no harm to anyone, but simply was avaricious.[2] And some say (*ibid.*) that לבן is to be read as if written with a *yōdh* (לבין), and then the reference is to Goliath, who is called a champion (אִישׁ הַבֵּנַיִם);[3] and when David had killed him he uttered this Psalm. My revered father,[4] of blessed memory, has (also) written that this Psalm was (originally) uttered

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1. There is some uncertainty about this name, whether *Dunash* is a derivative of "dominus," as Adonim and Adonijah are used of him and by him, and *Labrat*, the family name. He flourished in the eleventh century, and was distinguished as a poet who introduced the art of writing metrical Hebrew verses, and even more as a philologist. He had been the pupil of Saadya, and lived at Cordova, which was then becoming the centre of culture among the Spanish Jews. He was apparently well-to-do, and enjoyed the patronage of Chasdai ibn Shaprut, to whom he dedicated his criticism of Menahem's Lexicon. This criticism was the occasion of a literary quarrel which in turn inaugurated the movement which placed Hebrew philology on a firm scientific basis.
2. "Avaricious" = כילי; *cf.* Is. xxxii. 5, where כילי is the opposite of "lavish" (שׁוע).

   No more shall the fool (*Nabal*) *be called noble*
   Nor the avaricious (כילי) *be spoken of as lavish* (שׁוע).

   Ibn Ezra on Is. xxxii. 4 explains כילי as the opposite of שׁוע, *bountiful*.
3. *i.e.* "man of the *μεταίχμιον*." Ḳimḥi on 1 Sam. xvii. 4 says Goliath was so called "because he went out daily *between* the two hosts." בֵּנַיִם is explained as dual of בֵּין = *between*.
4. *i.e.* Joseph Ḳimḥi; see Introduction.

with reference to Goliath ; but he explained לבן (as referring) to a singer whose name was Ben (בֵּן), as it is written in Chronicles (1 Chron. xv. 18) : "*and with them their brethren of the second degree, Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel* ;" and he explained על מות, which is two words [= *on the death of*], as one word, עלמות, from (the expression) שיר עלמות ;[6] and similar instances of words divided into two, but with the significance of a single word, are פקח קוח (= *release*, Is. lxi. 1), יפה פיה (= *very fair*, Jer. xlvi. 20), and לגאי יונים (= *proud*, Ps. cxxiii. 4). And although the *lamedh* of לְבֵן is vocalised with the vowel *pathaḥ*, and this is not in accordance with usage in the case of a man's name—for you do not say לְיִצחק, לְיהוֹחָן, because the article is not employed with a proper name—nevertheless the article here is employed to indicate that he speaks with reference to Ben the singer ; for if he had said לְבֵן (pointed) with *sheva* it would not have been clear that he was speaking of the singer whose name was Ben. At all events, it is admissible to interpret the subject-matter of the Psalm as having reference to Goliath the Philistine.

2. **I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart:** for the death of Goliath the Philistine was a great deliverance to David and to Israel ; and for this (reason) he says *with my whole heart.*

I will recount all Thy marvellous works: for, in addition to *every* individual wonder, a man recounts other wonders which are past ; as it says, "*He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered*" (Ps. cxi. 4).

3. **I will be glad and exult in Thee:** for *in Thee* I trusted when I came to the fight with him, though I was a youth and he a man of war.

I will sing to Thy Name, O Thou Most High: for Thou art exalted above all, and vain is the might of man.

4. **When my enemies turn back,**
They stumble and perish at Thy presence.

For all the Philistine armies fled and turned *back*, as it is written (1 Sam. xvii. 51) : "*And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead they fled.*"

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5. = *Set to Alamoth. A Song* (Ps. xlvi. 1).

5. **For Thou hast maintained my right and my cause:** Thou hast fought for me, for it was a great miracle that the stone reached his forehead, as he was altogether clad in iron; and it found an exposed place in his forehead.

Thou didst take Thy seat in the throne: *Thou satest* on *the throne* of judgment, Thou who art

A judge of righteousness, to exact Thy judgment from him who reviled the armies of the living God. The *lamedh* of לכסא is used in the place of *beth*. And so also *lamedh* is used in the phrase לפניכם לחרב, "(*they shall fall*) *before you by the sword*" (Lev. xxvi. 7), where לחרב is equivalent to בחרב; (and again in the verse) "*I have slain* (*a man*) *by my wounding*" (לפצעי, Gen. iv. 23).

6. **Thou hast rebuked the nations** (גָּעַרְתָּ גּוֹיִם): (The expression for) *rebuke* when used without the preposition *beth* has the meaning of destruction, as: "*Rebuke the wild beast of the reed*" (Ps. lxviii. 31); and as, "*Behold, I will rebuke the seed for your sake*" (Mal. ii. 3); and so *Thou hast rebuked* (*the*) *nations* here. And he says, *Thou hast rebuked the nations*—these being the Philistines.

Thou hast destroyed the wicked (man): viz. Goliath the Philistine.

Thou hast blotted out their name: speaking of the dead in the war, as it is said (1 Sam. xvii. 52), "*And the despatched of the Philistines fell.*"

for ever and aye (עַד): This word (עַד) signifies a longer duration of time than עולם (*for ever*). Unless immediately before the end of a verse, it is pointed with *pathaḥ*; (and so also) when without (the accent) *'athnaḥ*, as (in the passage): "*And do not for ever* (לָעַד) *remember iniquity*" (Is. lxiv. 8); and (even) with *'athnaḥ*, as (in the passage): "*Knowest thou this from old time* (מִנִּי־עַד)?" (Job xx. 4); but at the end of a verse (in the form) לְעוֹלָם עָד, with *sĕghol*.

7. **And thou, O Enemy, they have come to an end, they are desolate for ever;**

Even the cities which thou hast overthrown,

Their very memorial is perished.

The *he* (of הָאוֹיֵב) is *he* of the vocative, as (in the passage), "*O assembly* (הקהל), *one statute for you*" (Num. xv. 15); and as, "*O*

generation (הדור), *see ye the word of the Lord"* (Jer. xx. 31). And as he said, *their name Thou hast blotted out*, so here he addresses the enemy : "thy name is blotted out as the name of the cities thou hast devastated is blotted out ; or, as they *have come to an end for ever and their memorial is perished*, so has thy memorial perished now." And my revered father, of blessed memory, expounds : *destructions have come to an end*, חַפּוּי הרבות—*i.e.* the destructions thou wast making shalt thou cause no more. And the learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra, of blessed memory, expounds (*ad loc.*) : because *the destructions* which thou hast made *have come to an end and* the *cities which thou hast uprooted, their memorial is perished*, thou hast thought to escape ; and hast forgotten that *the Lord sitteth enthroned for ever.* The explanation (of המה in) וזכרם המה (*their very memorial*) is, it intensifies the pronominal suffix,[6] for (the sense) would have been represented sufficiently by the *mem* of וזכרם (*their memorial*). Or its interpretation may be *their memorial has perished* so (completely) that those who see it shall say : "These surely are not the cities that were built !" And on this interpretation המה will be explained as (to be read) with a mark of interjection.

8. **But the Lord sitteth enthroned for ever :** These every one[7] may perish ; but *the Lord sitteth enthroned for ever*, and judges these every one.[7] And this is what he means when he says :

He hath prepared His throne for judgment, as it says (Ps. cii. 27), "*they shall perish, but Thou remainest.*" And the significance of *sitteth enthroned* (יֵשֵׁב) is that of enduring and stability ; and so (in the passage) "*The Lord sat enthroned at the flood*" (Ps. xxix. 10).

9. **And He shall judge the world in righteousness,**
He shall minister judgment to the people in equity.

תֵּבֵל (*world*) is the inhabited part. He says : As He will judge my cause *in righteousness*, so He judges the peoples *in righteousness* and *in equity* always and at all times ; and when one people prevails over another it is (equally) a judgment from Him.

10. **The Lord also will be a high tower for the oppressed,**
A high tower in times of trouble :

On every occasion that He judges the world He is *a high tower* of refuge for the poor. Although he may be lowly and without

6. lit. *doubles the pronoun.* 7. lit. *these and these.*

power and strength, He dare not leave him to those who are stronger, but is to him a high tower. And the poor has safety in Him as a man finds safety in a strong tower, and as Israel have found safety in Him to-day, and He is to them a strong tower. And *a high tower* also *in times* when they are *in trouble*, for Israel were now in great *trouble* on account of this Philistine, and Philistines who were making themselves masters over them, as it is said in (the section about) King Saul[8] (1 Sam. ix. 16), "*because their cry is come unto Me.*"

11. **And they will trust in Thee:** It is right that they should *trust in Thee*—viz.

those that know Thy Name—as Israel to-day—for they have seen

That Thou, Lord, didst not forsake them that seek Thee: but that Thou wast with them in the time of their trouble.

12. **Sing praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Sion:** He says: *which dwelleth in Sion*, and (that) in spite of the fact that Sion was still in the hands of the Jebusites, because they had a tradition that the Glory[9] should dwell there and the Sanctuary be built there; and Sion is the principal part (head) of Jerusalem.

Declare among the peoples His doings: In every place whither ye go, tell the doings and the wonders He worked among you.

13. **For He that maketh inquisition for blood remembered them:** God, who *makes inquisition* for the blood of the poor from their oppressors, *remembered that blood* which the Philistines had shed in Israel.

He did not forget the cry of the meek (עניים): The *Kĕthib* is written with a *yodh* (עניים = *poor*), but the *Ḳeri* (needs) a *waw* (ענוים = *meek*), for the meek are for the most part the poor and helpless.

14. **Have mercy upon me, O Lord:** (The word חנני is) pointed with *pathaḥ* under the *heth*, shewing that it is from the *Piel*, though undoubled,[10] as (Gen. xlii. 21): בְּהַחֲנֵנוֹ אֵלֵינוּ.

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8. For a similar method of referring to the Old Testament, *cf.* Luke xx. 37 (*in the place concerning the bush*).
9. *i.e.* the divine Glory (the Shekinah); *cf.* Exod. xxix. 43; 1 Sam. iv. 21–22; etc
10. *i.e.* חָנְנֵנִי, which is the better attested reading. The ordinary printed texts have חָנֵּנִי (= חָנֵנִי). חָנְנִי may be regarded as imperative Ḳal from an intransitive form חָנַן.

See my affliction at the hands of them that hate me: as Thou hast seen (me suffer) from this enemy—namely, Goliath.

Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death: for all were of opinion that I should fall at the hand of Goliath. The (phrase) *gates of death* means "near to death," as the gate is to the house.

15. **That I may recount:** so that, when I am delivered from those that hate me, I may recount

all Thy praises:

in the gates of the daughter of Sion: for there shall be the thanksgiving, and songs and psalms shall be uttered there, for there the Glory shall rest.

I will exult in Thy deliverance: *i.e.* the deliverance which Thou shalt effect for me from every single enemy I have. And he says *in the gates of* (in the same sense as in the verse) "*to the gate unto the elders*" (Deut. xxv. 7); and the word תְּהִלָּתֶךָ is written with *yodh* (in the suffix), for he intends to speak of many praises. It lacks the complete sign of the plural feminine, having the plural masculine suffix termination only.[11] And similar examples are: "*I am wearied in the multitude of thy counsels*" (עֲצָתָיִךְ,[12] Is. xlvii. 13); "*And thy sisters* (וַאֲחוֹתַיִךְ,[13] Ezek. xvi. 55), *Sodom and her daughters*" (see the interpretation our rabbi [14] (*ad loc.*) gives). And in that he says here *all Thy praises*; and in another place (Ps. cvi. 2) asks, "*Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?*" David says, *I will shew forth all Thy praises.* In spite of all the troubles which came upon him, he gave praise and (made) confession to God, who delivered him from the enemies; but when he comes to narrate the wondrous signs He had given Israel generation after generation, he asks, "Who can make known all His praise?" And so the individual alone is not able to tell the wondrous signs of goodness and mercy which the Holy One—Blessed be He!—worketh for him, as he says (*ibid.* xl. 6), "*If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*" For sometimes God—Blessed be He!—does a wondrous

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11. The plural would be תְּהִלּוֹתֶיךָ, the singular תְּהִלָּתְךָ. Here the singular form is provided with the plural suffix ending.
12. = (according to Ḳimḥi) עֲצַתֵךְ.
13. = אֲחוֹתַיִךְ.
14. *i.e.* David Ḳimḥi (an editorial remark).

sign for a man who is unaware of it until later when he reflects upon it. And so our rabbis of blessed memory have said (Babli, *Niddah* 31 *a*), "Even he to whom the wondrous sign happens does not recognise it." And when David says *all Thy praises*, he speaks of the wondrous signs which He had wrought for him which were evident and known to all in the war with the enemies.

16. **The nations are sunk down in the pit that they made:** The Philistines who came to fight against us thought to cause us to fall, and they have fallen themselves

In a net which they hid: and *in a net* which *they hid* to take us

is their own foot fallen: And the explanation of the particle זוּ is that it is equivalent to אֲשֶׁר; and so (in the passage) זוּ חָטָאנוּ לוֹ, "*He against whom we have sinned*" (Is. xlii. 24); but it is possible to take it in its usual sense as equivalent to זֶה, *this* (*i.e. in this net*).

17. **The Lord hath made Himself known:** Now the Lord has made Himself known in this war, for Israel had conquered them with but little strength and power, compared with theirs; and they would not have been able to conquer them except the Lord had fought for Israel.

He hath executed judgment: on the Philistines.

The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands: This (wicked one) is Goliath, for with his own sword was he killed. And the word נוֹקֵשׁ (*snared*) is written (here) with *ṣere* equivalent to *pathaḥ*, and is the *niphal* form with the same root-meaning as מוֹקְשִׁים, *snares*. It is possible also to explain the *nun* as radical, and then it is an intransitive verb, of which the meaning can be exemplified in the verse: "*they that seek my life laid snares* (וַיְנַקְּשׁוּ)" (Ps. xxxviii. 13). And נוקשׁ and יקשׁ have the same meaning.

Higgayon. Selah: This deliverance is the subject of our meditation (*higgāyôn*) and thanksgiving.

18. **The wicked shall return to Sheôl,**
Even all the nations that forget God.

The wicked shall return to the grave. And he says, *they shall return* just as "*and unto dust shalt thou return*" (Gen. iii. 19).

And *shall return* is used (in the manner of) a prayer, as if saying: Just as all these haters of Israel have died, so let all those perish who *forget God.* And in the Haggadic interpretation (Babli, *Sanhedrin* 105 *a*, and *Shoḥer Tôb*, *ad loc.*) "to Sheôl is Gehinnom. And they say (*ibid.* with a slight verbal change), Why does he say לשאולה, *to Sheôl*? Is not every *hē* at the end of a word equivalent to *lamedh* at the commencement? Why, then, does he say לשאולה with *lamedh*? To say that they shall descend to the very heart,[15] or to the lowest degree, of Sheôl" (*Gen. Rabbah*, pars. 50 and 68).

19. **For not for ever shall the needy be forgotten:** If Israel should continue in trouble because of the Philistines, this will not be for any length of time.

Nor the expectation of the poor perish for ever: *Not* is actually written once only, but is understood twice; and such is the usage of the language in many passages. ענוים (*meek*), the *Kethiḇ* has *waw*, but the *Ḳeri* is עניים with *yodh*; and the meanings are cognate, for the poor are generally the meek.

20. **Arise, O Lord:** קומה, *Arise*, with the accent *milraʿ*. And he says: "Arise," as he says, "Lift up Thyself"; and all is figurative, (calling to God) that He should rise up to judge the wicked.

let not man prevail: *Let not* the children of men who possess strength and might against Israel *prevail* any more.

Let the nations be judged before Thy face. על פניך, equivalent to לפניך. And so, "*other gods before Me* (על פני)" (Exod. xx. 3; Deut. v. 7).

21. **Put them in fear, O Lord:** שיתה (*put*) with the accent *milraʿ*. מורה (*fear*) is written with *hē* for *aleph*. He asks that (God) would bring it about that they may fear Him.

Let the nations know themselves to be but mortal. Selah: *Let them know* that they are *mortal* (men, אנושים) and have not strength as against God, for the sense of אנוש is derived from that (of אָנוּשׁ in the passage) (Jer. xxx. 12): "*it is ill* (אנוש) *with thy bruise.*"

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15. Hebrew בטן = lit. "belly" (*cf.* Jonah ii. 3). This is the reading adopted here by the Editor of the Hebrew text (Dr. Schiller-Szinessy); but the reading of the passage in the Midrash is uncertain, varying between אמבטי, בטי, אמבטה, etc. In the Talmudic passage which is the source (T.J. *Yeb.* i. 3*a* bottom) the true reading seems to be דיוקא (= διαίτα, *room*).

PSALM X

1. **Why standest Thou afar, O Lord?** David did not utter this Psalm of any one particular occasion; it is rather a prayer which anyone who is in trouble by reason of an enemy might use. In it he tells of the ways of the wicked in his persecution of the poor and him who is helpless to escape him. And because usually the persecutor does not act openly, he tells of the persecution by the wicked, how he oppresses the poor by means of ambush and secret place; and that (the poor) has no means of safeguarding himself from him but (in turning) his eyes upon the Lord. And he tells of the deeds of the wicked individually and generally, for the wicked is one and his helpers many. And he includes in the Psalm likewise (a reference to) the persecution with which the nations of the world would persecute Israel in their land; therefore he says (v. 16), *the heathen are perished out of his land.* And he says: that *mortal man* (*shall no longer*) *oppress* (v. 18). He says: *Why standest Thou afar, O Lord?* For when help comes from Him to the poor and to him that crieth, it is as if He were nigh and helping him, as it says (Deut. iv. 7): "*that hath a God so nigh unto them*"; and it says (Ps. cxlv. 18): "*The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him*"; and when the enemy prevails it is as if God were far away, and hiding His eyes from the poor—therefore he says: *Why standest Thou afar, O Lord?* And the *beth* of ברחוק stands really for two words; I mean במקום רחוק, "in a place afar."

Why hidest Thou Thyself in times of trouble (בעתה)**?**—*times*, that is, when the poor is in trouble (בעתה).

2. **In the pride of the wicked does he hotly pursue the poor:** that is, in the (bold and) public way with which in his pride he pursues him.

Let them be caught in the devices that (זו) **they have planned:** *Let them be caught* is a prayer: May it please Thee that the wicked *be caught* in the *devices* that they have planned to catch

the poor. זו is to be explained as the equivalent of אשר, and so (Is. xlii. 24) : זו חטאנו לו, "*He against whom we have sinned.*"

3. **For the wicked doth congratulate himself:** because he congratulates himself

upon his soul's desire: When he does it and none denies him, Thou shalt shew him that there is One supreme over him, and he shall be caught in what he proposes to do.

And blesses the robber, him who despises the Lord: The wicked blesses and praises the robber and him who holds on his way and despises God, and says that He is powerless to deliver the oppressed out of his hand, or that there is none who pays regard to him, as it says (v. 13), *He says in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.*

4. **The wicked according to the loftiness of his looks** (lit. *nose*): The loftiness of the heart displays itself in the face, and the face is indicated by the nose (אף), for it is high upon the face, as (1 Sam xx. 41), "*and fell on his nose* (לאפיו)," where the meaning is *on his face*; "*and bowed to him nose* (אפים) *to the earth*" (Gen. xlii. 6), where the meaning is *faces.*

doth not (seek) God: Because of his haughtiness and pride he does not seek God, neither does he pray to Him.

All his thoughts are, There is no God: *All the thoughts of* the wicked and his calculations are : that *there is no God* judging in the earth, and everything which man pleases to do let him do, for there is none to seek (require), and none to search it out, therefore *he* does not *seek God.*

5. **His ways are grievous**—(יחילו may be explained) from the significance of חיל in "*pain* (חיל) *as of a woman in travail*" (Ps. xlviii. 7). He says : that the evil ways of the wicked cause pangs to the poor.

always: for all the while he is in the world they are afraid of him.

O Exalted One, Thy judgments are out of his sight: מרום (*Exalted*) is a vocative addressed to God—Blessed be He! He says : For Thou, O Lord, *Exalted One, Thy judgments are out of his sight* and do not touch him, therefore he is boastful.

All his adversaries: *i.e.* the poor.

he puffeth at them: They are as a puff of breath[1] before him. Or it (יפיח) may be interpreted from the meaning (of פח) a *trap* and a snare: as if to say that he sets a trap among them to take them. And so "*they bring a city into a snare* (יפיחו)" (Prov. xxix. 8).

6. **He says in his heart, I shall not be moved:** He thinks *in his heart I shall not* ever *be moved*; I shall never *be moved* from my greatness.

generation after generation not be in adversity: *For generation after generation* shall I live, for I shall *not* be *in*, nor see, adversity; therefore I shall live a long time.

7. **His mouth is full of swearing, deceit, and fraud:** Such is the way of the wicked; when he wishes to deceive others he swears to them with a full mouth, so that he may seem to swear in all sincerity,[2] and this is *deceit and fraud. Fraud* also is the same as deceit, because there is not really in his heart what he pretends with his mouth.

Under his tongue is mischief and iniquity: When he takes an oath with his tongue, *under his tongue* is *mischief and iniquity.* The heart is *under* the tongue, hidden from what is revealed by the tongue. So also (in the verse) "*high praise was under my tongue*" (Ps. lxvi. 17); he (the Psalmist) is speaking of the heart. And מלא (*full*) is not an adjective, but a verb, as: "*and the glory of the Lord filled* (מלא) *the tabernacle*" (Exod. xl. 34). He says: he fills his mouth with *swearing* so that a man may trust him, and then he plays him false.

8. **He sitteth in the places of ambush of the villages:** The *villages* are the open towns which are upon the highways: as "*her towns* (lit. *her daughters*) *and her villages*" (Jos. xv. 45); "*the villages that Kedar doth inhabit*" (Is. xlii. 11). Similarly we find (Zech. ii. 8) "*Jerusalem shall dwell as open regions.*"[3]

In the secret places doth he murder the innocent: for usually the wicked does not do his wicked work openly, but he sits *in ambushes and secret places* that he may beware of the sons of men so that they may not see him. But he cannot beware of the All-seeing God!

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1. lit. *a blowing of the mouth.* 2. lit. *with his whole intent.*
3. Or, *hamlets* (פרזות).

His eyes lie in wait for the hapless : לחלכה is equivalent to חלך with the addition of *hē* ; and its interpretation : "for the poor." He says : that the eyes of the wicked are on the look out for the poor, to take him. And יצפנו (*lie in wait for*) is an intransitive verb, as if he meant "he sets his eyes in a hidden place (צפון), and from thence looks out over the roads."

9. **He lieth in ambush in the secret place as a lion in his den : He lieth in ambush to catch the poor : He catcheth the poor, when he draweth him in his net.**

He likens him to *a lion* as he crouches *in his den* and *lieth in wait to catch* the passer-by or one near at hand, so that they will not (be able to) guard themselves against him and flee from him when they see him ; and when he sees the prey *he catcheth* (it). And (the word) "catching" here means "seizing quickly," for the wicked sits in ambush *in the secret place*. Afterwards he compares him with a fowler who spreads his net and stands at a distance from it so that the bird may not be aware of him, and the cords of the net are in his hand, and when the bird falls into the net he closes the net with the cords in his hand and the bird is taken. So is the way of the wicked. Sometimes he will not be in ambush, but will stand at a distance from the roads, so that men may not beware of him ; and then when he sees the poor and the helpless he rushes upon them. Or he stations some members of his band on the roads without any weapons, while he himself is with the armed men some distance off. Then as defenceless people pass these give them a signal and they come ; and they (the decoys) are to them as the net to the fowler. He tells of yet another way the wicked adopts, and this is what he says :

10. **He is crushed, he humbleth himself :** ודכה the *Kethib* is written with *waw*, and the *Keri* (ידכה) with *yodh*, and the *waw* and the *yodh* interchange. He says : that in yet another sense it is the way of the wicked to get the poor into his power. He makes himself (as one) *crushed* and *humble*. He and his band pretend that they are weak and crushed, so that the children of men may not be on their guard against them, but go forth with them in the company on the way ; and then when they are far from any human habitation they reveal their strength and power and seize them ; and this (is the meaning of)

And the hapless fall by their strong (ones) : (The *Kethib*) is written as one word, וחלכאים,[4] but the *Keri* reads as two words,

4. = *hapless*.

חל נאים ; and its interpretation is : "the congregation of the stricken and the weary."[5] And עצומיו (*their strong ones*) is an adjective for "their strong limbs"—their hands and feet. And all these are the ways which he narrates in the matter of the wicked, to shew that in all these ways he may be wary of the sons of men, but cannot be wary of God, and (that) he shews himself to be no fearer of God ; for he says in his heart that He (God) does not see and does not know, as he says :

11. **He says in his heart, God hath forgotten :**
He hideth His face ; He will never see.

If He knows, He *has forgotten*. Or its interpretation is : that He does not know at all, like the man who has forgotten a matter and does not know it, or like the man who knows a matter, but *hides his face* and is unwilling ever to *see* it ; therefore he says :

12. **Arise, O Lord ; O God, lift up Thy hand :** Because the wicked says that Thou dost not see, do Thou *arise* and *lift up Thy hand* against him.

Forget not the meek : even as the wicked has said, *God has forgotten*. The *Kethib* is עניים (*poor*) ; the *Keri* ענוים (*meek*).

13. **Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God,**
(And) say in his heart, Thou wilt not require ?

For why is he *despising* Thee ? Only because *he says in his heart* that *Thou wilt not require*, nor regard what he says and does.

14. **Thou hast seen :** The *yodh* of the third radical is missing from the form as written.[6] The wicked man says that Thou dost not see ; but *Thou hast seen* all.

For Thou assuredly

beholdest mischief and spite : The *mischief* and *spite* which the wicked exhibits towards the poor, *Thou beholdest it*.

To put (the matter) in Thine hand : when it shall please Thee to exact the judgment of the poor from the wicked. For

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5. lit. *army of dejected ones* (חֵל כָּאִים).
6. *i.e.* רָאִתָה of the text = רָאִיתָה.

To Thee the hapless leaveth: the *hapless, i.e.* he that is poor, (leaveth) his cause ; for often has he seen that

Thou hast been the helper of the fatherless: for Thou hast been the *helper* of the *fatherless* and the weak, therefore he waits for *Thee* and leaves his cause *to Thee.* And in חלכה the *hē* is added, as we have (already) explained (*supra*, v. 8).

15. **Break Thou the arm of the wicked:** *Break his arm* and his strength.

And as for the evil man, do Thou seek out his wickedness and Thou shalt find none: When he says *Thou wilt not require*, as he said above (13), shew him that Thou dost require ; and if Thou doest so, *Thou shalt not find wickedness* in the earth, for if Thou shouldest break his arm, then those who remain will hear and fear. And רשע and רע (*wickedness* and *evil*) are synonyms (lit., is a double word).

16. **The Lord is King for ever and ever:** When Thou shalt execute judgment upon the wicked who oppress Israel in exile, then Thou shalt be *King for ever and ever* and none shall rebel against Thy word, as it says (Zech. xiv. 9), "*And the Lord shall be King over all the earth*"; and then

The heathen are perished out of his land: and the kingdom shall return to Israel.

17. **Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the meek:** *Thou hast heard* is equivalent (here) to "Thou wilt hear," and its interpretation (is) *Thou hast heard* their prayer according to their *desire.* Or its interpretation is: *Thou didst hear* their *desire* before they gave it expression, as it says (Is. lxv. 24) : "*And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer*"; and so on.

Thou wilt establish their heart: Thou wilt remove from their heart worldly anxiety, for *their heart* is distracted by reason of their poverty and their wanderings, and Thou wilt help them to *establish their heart* upon Thee in devotion. And then

Thou wilt make Thine ear attend to their prayer. And the interpretation of תקשיב אוזנך is : Thou shalt make *Thine ears* to be attentive.

18. **To judge the fatherless and the downtrodden:** And what was their prayer? (For Thee) *to judge the fatherless and downtrodden.* And its interpretation is : to exact their judgment from their oppressors. For

No longer shall terrify them or affright them any more

man (that is) of the earth: and they shall only be in fear of Thee. לערץ (*terrify*) is (here) a transitive verb, and is similarly transitive (in the passages): "*when He ariseth to terrify* (לערץ) *the earth*" (Is. ii. 19); "*Wilt thou harass* (תערוץ) *a driven leaf?*" (Job xiii. 25).

PSALM XV

1. **A Psalm of David.**

Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy Tabernacle?

And[1] who shall dwell in Thy Holy Hill?

Thy Tabernacle:[2] that is, the heavens, and he designates them a tent because they are spread out as a tent. And *Thy Holy Hill* is Mount Moriah, where the Holy House was, for it was the most glorious place in the earth. And in like manner he designates them (the heavens) a palace, as he says (Ps. xi. 4): "*The Lord is in His Holy Palace; the Lord, His throne is in heaven*," as we have interpreted. So also, "*He heard my voice out of His Palace*" (*ibid.* xviii. 7). (The questions) *Who shall sojourn?* and *Who shall dwell?* have reference to the higher spiritual part (of man). He says that he who has done in his lifetime these works (about to be mentioned), his spirit shall dwell in the place of Glory after his death. And what are the works?

2. **He that walketh perfectly:** If תמים (*perfect*) is an adjective, his meaning is, One who *walks* in a *perfect* way, as, "*He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall minister unto me*" (*ibid.* ci. 6); while if it is a noun, (it is used) as (in the passage) "*if in truth and perfectness* (בתמים)" (Judges ix. 16). He means: He who walks in perfectness (integrity), as, "*But as for me I will walk in mine integrity* (בתמי)" (Ps. xxvi. 11). But in either case the meaning is the same. The *perfect* is he who occupies himself in the affairs of this world in the way of perfectness (integrity), who does not engage his deepest purpose in (the prosecution of) worldly schemes.[3]

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1. Dr. Schiller-Szinessy notes that the *waw* (= "and") here (which is absent from the received Hebrew text) has been added by the second scribe of the MS., who seems to have been an excellent grammarian.
2. lit. *tent.*
3. lit. *in the cunning devices of the world.*

and worketh righteousness: because he does all his works *in righteousness*. Now the laws of man, positive and negative, fall under three aspects: one concerned with deed, one with speech, and one with thought. Notice he has just mentioned (that concerned with) deed.

and speaketh truth in his heart: Now this one combines both speech and thought. He says that he *speaketh truth*, a lie will never be found in his words. And the *truth* he speaks with his mouth is *in his heart*, for he does not say one thing with his mouth and another in his heart; and as the words of his mouth are *truth*, so are the thoughts of *his heart*. And it is implied in this expression of his *and speaketh truth in his heart* that he carries into effect what he has purposed *in his heart—i.e.* to do good. And this, too, in the ordinary affairs of life,[4] as though to say that there is no need to say that what he has actually said with his mouth he makes good; but even that what is in his mind only he brings to effect, and he makes truth his purpose. There is likewise also implied in it the greatness of God's existence and His unity, which is *truth*; and confessing (*speaking*) this with his mouth and thinking it *in his heart* (is calculated) to give him discernment in a wonderful way as wisdom teaches him.

3. **He that slandereth not with his tongue:** In this verse he specifies certain prohibitions[5] both as regards speech and deed; but it was not necessary for him to mention (such) of the heart, for he has already said *and speaketh truth in his heart*, and if his thoughts are truth and righteousness, then there is no evil in his thoughts. He says *he slandereth not with his tongue*, but does not enunciate the rest of the prohibitions concerning speech, such as: "*Thou shalt not bear* (*false witness*) *against thy neighbour*" (Exod. xx. 16); "*Thou shalt not revile the judges*" (*ibid.* xxii. 27); and the like, for he says that which is true, and as a matter of course the others (follow); for from tale-bearing, although its subject-matter may be true, great harm proceeds. And so he says, *and speaketh truth in his heart*, for the truth that is harmful he does not utter, and that is tale-bearing.

Nor doeth evil to his friend: *His friend* and *his intimate* is he with whom he has intercouse in the affairs of the world, or is his neighbour; and when he says, *Nor doeth evil to his friend*, he does not say that he does it to others, but the text speaks in

4. lit. in *carrying and giving* ("give and take"), *i.e.* everyday business.
5. lit. *negative commandments.*

accordance with usual custom. For instance, "*And ye shall not wrong your neighbour*" (Lev. xxv. 17) does not mean that one is free to wrong another, a stranger, who is not one's neighbour. And so again, "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy friend*" (Exod. xx. 16) does not say that one is free to bear false witness against another who is not one's friend; but (he says "friend") because his general and business relations are with him. And such is frequently the idiom of the language. So when he says *Nor doeth evil to his friend* he includes all that is prohibited [5] as between a man and his fellow. And he says of the law of the tongue:

Nor taketh up a reproach against his intimate: because he does not reproach nor revile a man even though the latter may have reviled or wronged him. He uses "*taketh up*" (נשׂא) of the lifting up of the tongue, as "*Thou shalt not take up* (תשׂא) *the Name of the Lord thy God for falsehood*" (Exod. xx. 7); "*Thou shalt not take up a false report*" (*ibid.* xxiii. 1). When he says *his intimate* the same applies also to another, but he speaks in accordance with usual custom, as we have explained (above). And קִרְבּוֹ (*his intimate*) is equivalent to רֵעֵהוּ (*his friend*), because he is intimately associated with him in his ordinary dealings, or is his actual neighbour, nearer to him than the rest; for a man's intercourse and business are for the most part with such.

4. **Despised is he in his own eyes, rejected:** He recounts further some of his good qualities. For although he *walketh perfectly and worketh righteousness and speaketh truth*, he does not pride himself upon this, but is *despised in his own eyes* and *rejected*, thinking in his heart that he cannot perform one-thousandth part of what it is his duty to do for the honour of his Creator.

But he honoureth them that fear the Lord: He is *despised in his own eyes*, but he *honoureth them that fear the Lord*; for all the good things he has done he counts as nothing compared with what he considers he ought to do, while the good (works) another does he holds to be great things. He feels too that there are others among those who *fear the Lord* in a superior degree to himself, and that they fear the Name [6] more than he, and so he imputes to them superiority over himself, and *honours* them. And he makes a further enumeration of his good qualities:

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6. *i.e.* the Divine Name, substituted for the personal designation of God.

He sweareth to his own hurt: The interpretation of להרע (*to his hurt*) is *to* the *hurt* of his body in fasting, and in abstinence from pleasures ; and so to be in want of clothing even for the sake of righteousness and the *mitzvoth*.[7]

and changeth not what he has sworn, although it be to the injury of his person. He will *not change*, but carry it out as he has promised. And as regards the expression he uses, *sweareth*, (it is) because when he has spoken a hard thing against himself, *he sweareth* so that the evil impulse shall not distract him from the performance of it. And so David says (Ps. cxix. 106) : "*I have sworn and have confirmed it, that I will observe Thy righteous judgments.*"

5. **He hath not given his money upon usury:** Already he has said, *Nor doeth evil to his friend*, and in this it is understood that he does not oppress or rob him, or steal from him. Now he says that even with his consent he does not take his money, together with something against which there is a prohibition—that is, *usury*. Although he gives it of his free will, he is obliged to give it, because he (the borrower) must borrow from him ; and if he restores his money and the interest besides, and he takes his neighbour's money, it is wrong, even if it be done with his consent. Now as regards this matter, just because men are accustomed to it and do not denounce it as spoliation as they do robbery or stealing, therefore the Law is severe upon it and often warns against it. The Prophets also class it among the flagrant offences. And he who is accustomed to have recourse to it loses his money in a short time. But David and Ezekiel [8] only forbid what the Law forbids, and the Law only forbids it in the case of Israel, but allows it in the case of the foreigner, as it is said (Deut. xxiii. 21) : "*Unto a foreigner thou mayest lend upon usury.*" But it is not so said of robbery and stealing and loss and fraud, for even in the case of the stranger to oppress or rob him or steal his money is forbidden ; but usury which is received from him with his knowledge and consent is permitted. An Israelite is bound to shew kindness to his fellow-Israelite, and the loan without interest is kindness and goodness ; at times a greater kindness even than a gift, for men often will hesitate to accept a gift, but not a loan. Such, however, is not the case between the Israelite and the Gentile, for the former is under no obligation to shew him kindness or to lend him money gratuitously, for generally these hate Israel. But assuredly if the Gentile shews

7. *i.e.* pious duties enjoined in the Law. 8. *cf.* Ezek. xviii. 8, 17.

kindness and goodness to an Israelite, he, for his part, is bound to return his kindness and to do him good.

Now I have enlarged on this matter so that you can answer the Christians who say that David did not distinguish between Jew and Gentile, and that all interest is forbidden. This, however, will not hold, for David does not forbid what Moses our teacher permitted at the command of God. Notice that the Torah says (Deut. xiii. 1): "*Thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish therefrom.*"

Nor taketh reward against the innocent: This also is money (taken) with the consent of him that gives it. If it is (intended) to pervert the course of justice, already he has said, *Nor doeth evil to his friend*, and this is included in it. But even if he has not perverted justice, but is innocent in judgment, save only that the (would-be) giver does not think that he will so act—yet he never takes money from the litigant, as Samuel the Prophet says —for he was judging Israel (1 Sam. xii. 3): "*Whose ox have I taken?*" etc.

He that doeth these things: He who *does these* good *things* which we have mentioned

shall never be moved: Even in his death he *shall not be moved*, for his soul shall dwell in the place of Glory.

PSALM XVI

1. **A Mikhtam of David:** We have already written in the Psalm "*Hear me when I call*" (iv.) of the meaning of the word *Mikhtam*.

Preserve me: The שׁ (of שָׁמְרֵנִי) is lengthened with *ga'ya*.[1]

O Almighty: Thou, Lord, art *mighty* and potent, therefore I call unto Thee to preserve me.

for I put my trust in Thee: and in no other beside Thee.

2. **Thou** (fem.) **hast said to the Lord, Thou art my Sovereign Lord:** He addresses his soul and says: *Thou hast said* and confessed *to the Lord* that He is thy God and *Sovereign Lord*; and such (address) is proper for thee; and thou shalt say unto Him likewise:

The good I do is not unto Thee:[2] They (Rashi and Rabbi Moses ha-Cohen ibn Giḳtilla[3]) have interpreted (the clause): "The good which Thou doest to me it is not incumbent upon Thee to do, for I am not worthy of it, but it is entirely due to Thy loving-kindness." And my revered father, of blessed memory, has interpreted: "The good I do is not done to Thee," meaning that it does not reach Thee (personally), for one cannot dispose for, or help, or give to Thee; but it is

3. **To the holy ones who are in the earth:** The form of expression is like (that of לְאִישׁ in): "*To a man* (לְאִישׁ) *as thou art thy wickedness* (*may reach*)" (Job xxxv. 8).[4] And because I love Thee I love those who are *holy*, and I do good to them.

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1. *i.e. methegh.*
2. Hebrew טוּבתי בל עלך.
3. See note on Ps. viii. 3.
4. The context of this passage from Job well illustrates our Rabbi's comments on the present passage. It runs:

If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him?
Or what receiveth He at thine hand?
To a man as thou art thy wickedness (*may reach*),
And to a son of man thy righteousness.—(xxxv. 7–8).

And excellent ones—all my delight is in them: To those who are most *excellent* of heart among all the children of men, and better than they—my delight is in them to do them good, because they keep and do Thy commandments. And for this reason he calls them *holy and excellent*. And, according to the former interpretation, they interpret *for the holy ones* (לקדושים) thus: "I am not worthy of Thy goodness, but *for the holy ones* Thy goodness is worthy." In my opinion the words *to the holy ones* depend upon *Thou hast said to the Lord*, meaning, after thou[5] hast said *to the Lord* that He is *thy Sovereign Lord*, thou shouldest say also *to the holy ones which are in the earth* that thou wilt humble thyself before them, and yield them superiority over thyself, and learn from their works; and all is with a view to perfection, that thou shouldest learn the love of God. And in this way our sages of blessed memory have said (Babli, *Pesaḥim* 22 *b*): "'*Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God*' (Deut. vi. 13)—*i.e.* to multiply the disciples of the wise." And he says, *which are in the earth*, meaning, Walk in the steps of the holy ones whom thou shalt find in thy way, and learn from their works. In my opinion וְאַדִּירֵי (*excellent ones*) is not *construct*, for similar examples are to be found, as חַלּוֹנֵי שְׁקוּפִים (*windows narrow*), (1 Kings vi. 4); נִטְעֵי נעמנים (*pleasant plants*) (Is. xvii. 10); and such like. And the meaning of *holy ones* and *excellent in whom is all my delight* is that one should love them and walk in their ways—viz. of *the holy ones which are in the earth*; the way of *the holy ones*, the servants of God, I love, but the way of the others, who serve another god, I hate; and I say:

4. **Their sorrows shall be multiplied which after another hasten:** viz. away from them (the holy and excellent)—the men, that is, who hasten to *another* god. This form, מהרו, is the only instance of its use in the *Ḳal* in the sense of "hastening";[6] but there is the possibility that it is used in the sense of *dowry* (מהר) *and gift* (Gen. xxxiv. 12); and as "*a dowry shall he pay him for her*" (מהר ימהרנה, Exod. xxii. 15). Or the sense in which אחר מהרו is to be taken is: I shall cleave to the *holy* and *excellent ones* and the *sorrows* of the men *shall multiply*—the *sorrows*, that is, of those who *hasten* to other men to walk in *other* ways which are not the ways of the Lord; and this is the correct interpretation.

Their drink-offerings of blood will I not pour out: Far be it from me that I *should pour out their drink-offerings* which are

5. *i.e.* the Psalmist's soul.
6. מהר = "hasten" is regularly used only in the Piel in this sense.

of blood. (It is to be taken) on the analogy of "*and ye have brought* (*that which was taken by*) *violence*" (Mal. i. 13); as though meaning *their drink-offerings* are not wine, but *blood*; for burnt-offerings and drink-offerings with wicked works neither profit nor deliver, but harm, as it says: "*the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination*" (Prov. xxi. 27).

Nor take their names upon my lips: And even *the names* of these men I will not bring up *upon my lips.*

5. **The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and my cup:** I have no other portion beside Him as these men have, whose inheritance and portion is silver and gold and the pleasures of the world; but, as for me, *the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and my cup.* The portion, the inheritance, the cup, and the lot are identical; it is simply a repetition of the idea with a change of terms to give emphasis, as is the custom of the language; the meaning being, in all my words and in all my affairs He is *my inheritance* and to Him is my devotion (directed). And the interpretation of

Thou maintainest my lot (is): Thou didst help me when I chose this inheritance for myself, as they say (Babli, *Yoma* 38 *b*): "*He who comes to be cleansed is helped* (*by Heaven*)."[7] And the word תּוֹמִיךְ (*maintainest*) is written with *ḥireq* equivalent to *ṣērē*;[8] and so "*Behold, I add* (יוֹסֵף) *to thy days*" (Isaiah xxxviii. 5); "*Behold, I add* (יוֹסֵף) *to do a marvellous work*"—with *ḥireq* equivalent to *ṣere* (*ibid.* xxix. 14).

6. **The lines have fallen for me in pleasant (places):** The inheritances which *have fallen to me have fallen for me* in *pleasant* places, and in the possession of good and right knowledge.[9]

Yea, I have a goodly heritage: The *tav* (of נַחֲלָה, *heritage*) is in the place of *hē*, and is not a sign of the *construct*; and similarly we find "*My strength and song* (וְזִמְרָת) *is Jah*" (Exod. xv. 2; Is. xii. 2; Ps. cxviii. 14); "*Give us help* (עֶזְרַת) *against the adversary*" (*ibid.* lx. 13); "*How is the city of praise* (תְּהִלַּת) *not forsaken?*" (Jer. xlix. 25), and such like. And the reason (for the use of) *Yea* is: because the way of the men of the world when

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7. lit. *they* (*i.e.* the heavenly powers) *help him.*
8. *i.e.* תּוֹמִיךְ = תּוֹמֵךְ (participle of תמך).
9. *i.e.* spiritual possessions.

they divide anything among themselves is for everyone to covet the portion of his fellow, and for it to seem in his eyes as though his fellow's portion is better than his own. But it is not so with me, *Yea* for mine is a *goodly heritage* and portion, and I am not envious of another's, for mine is the good portion.

7. **I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel:** (in the same sense) as we have interpreted *Thou maintainest my lot.*[10]

Yea, by night: This was the beginning (of help) for me from the *Lord*, that He *gave me counsel* and helped me when I chose this good part for my own ; and likewise within me every day do

my reins admonish me: that I should not abandon this way, but hold to it with all my might. And he says *by night*, because at night a man is isolated from the preoccupations of the world and his mind is free. And he says *my reins*, for they are the counsellors, as they say (Babli, *Berakhoth* 61 *a*) " *The reins counsel an understanding heart.*"

8. **I have set the Lord always before me:** In all my ways will I remember Him. As something which is before a man *always* so that it departs not from his eyes and mind, so have I placed the glory of God *always before me* ; for I know that He is *at my right hand* and is my help ; therefore *I shall* not *be moved* wherever I come and go. And the great teacher Moses ben Maimon, of blessed memory, has expounded the passage thus (*Guide of the Perplexed*, 3, 51) :

Because He is at my right hand: " He is, as it were, my right hand, which a man cannot forget for the twinkling of an eye on account of the quickness of its movement, and because of this

I shall not be moved: meaning, ' I shall not fall.' "

9. **Therefore my heart is glad:** Because I have put Thee *before me always my heart is glad.*

and my glory exulteth: that is, the soul, which is the glory of the body ; for I am confident that when it is separated from the body[11] it will cleave to its Creator.

My flesh also: while I am still alive

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10 The Lord has given him counsel and help, because Heaven helps those " who come to purify themselves."

11. *i.e.* at death.

shall dwell in security: for Thou shalt deliver me from all harm. And in the Haggadic interpretation (*Shoḥer Ṭōb* and Babli, *Baba Bathra* 17 *a*) (the explanation is given): "after death, when worm and corruption shall have no power over it, (shall my flesh dwell in security)."

10. **For Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol:**

Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see the pit:

For I know that while I hold fast to life, that is the right way that I am in—and this is what he means in saying *Thy holy one*—I know that *Thou wilt not leave my soul* to go down to *Sheol* with the body, but wilt raise it to Thy glory. And in the Haggadic interpretation (*Shoḥer Ṭōb*) (the explanation is given): "Everyone who hears himself reviled and holds his peace, in judgment is called 'holy one.'" *Thou wilt not suffer*: a repetition of the thought with a change of words.

11. **Thou wilt shew me the path of life:**

In Thy presence is fulness of joy:

At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore: (To be understood) as a prayer that God may teach him the way by which he may attain to the life of the world to come; meaning, that He will make him understand and discern the way in which the soul shall live when it is separated from the body and attain to *fulness of joy in Thy presence* and to *pleasures at Thy right hand*; for those *joys* and *pleasures* will be *for evermore*, for all eternity, and to them there shall be no end; and this is the soul's delight. The reason (for using the expressions) *in Thy presence* and *at Thy right hand* is: that the "presence" and "the right hand" are the Glory, as, "*the upright shall dwell in Thy presence*" (Ps. cxl. 14); and so it is written of the right hand (*ibid.* cx. 1): "*Sit thou at My right hand.*"

PSALM XVII

1. **A Prayer of David.**

Hear right, O Lord, attend unto my ringing cry:

Give ear to my prayer, that goeth out of no feigned lips.

Hear my prayer, which is (uttered) in *righteousness*; *Hear* it for my mouth and heart are at one; and this is the meaning of *righteousness*, and of *no feigned lips*. The whole verse is a repetition of the one idea in different terms. רִנָּתִי (*my ringing cry*) also is of the same meaning as צִעֲקָתִי (*my cry*), for he who prays sometimes cries with a ringing voice and sometimes in a low tone. Every use of the expression רנה denotes a cry, such being employed sometimes of singing and rejoicing, sometimes of public announcement, sometimes of prayer and entreaty, and sometimes of weeping and groaning; and each (nuance) is distinct, according to its context.

2. **Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence:** My revered father, of blessed memory, has interpreted: that this prayer has reference to the incident of Bathsheba; and that he (David) is interceding before the Holy One—Blessed be He!—and says: מִלְּפָנֶיךָ מִשְׁפָּטִי יֵצֵא, *i.e. May this sentence pass forth from Thee*, so that Thou wilt not condemn me in it.

Let Thine eyes regard the right: Behold *the right* that I have done, and regard not this iniquity; and judge me in the multitude of my good deeds, and not for this iniquity. And he says:

3. **Thou hast proved my heart; Thou hast visited me by night; Thou hast tried me, and findest nothing:**

In that *night Thou didst prove*, and *visit my heart*, and *try me* and didst not find me clean. And he says:

I purposed—let not my mouth transgress!

What I thought to say was: "*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me*" (*ibid.* xxvi. 2). Oh that *my mouth* had not *transgressed*, and that I had not been one to say this thing of which I boasted and at which I stumbled! And he says:

4. **As for the works of men, by the word of Thy lips**—in what Thou hast commanded and forbidden—

I have observed the ways of the violent: meaning, I have done according to the work of the wicked and the *violent*. The learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra expounds: "*Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence* so that Thou punish me if *Thine eyes regard* not *the right!*" But all this seems to me far-fetched, and to me it seems more probable that it should be taken as (*ibid.* ix. 5) "*For Thou hast maintained my right and my cause*," of which the interpretation is: Thou shalt exact judgment for me from my enemies; and so, *from Thy presence let my judgment come forth* may mean that Thou wilt exact judgment for me from mine enemies. *Thine eyes regard right*: Thou seest that with me is *right* and with them wickedness and violence. And so the greater part of the Psalm has reference to (his) enemies, as he says (*infra*, 7), "*From those that rise up against Thy right hand.*" And he says (also) (*ibid.* 9): "*From the wicked that spoil me.*" You see that the Psalm speaks of his enemies, and it was on account of them he was seeking mercy; and he says that God will look upon the uprightness of his deeds and see that his enemies hate him without cause. He says also, *Thou hast proved my heart*, for Thou dost prove hearts, and knowest if my words are (those of) truth. *Thou hast visited me in the night*: and *in the night—i.e.* at a time when a man thinks of so many matters, when he is free from the business of the world and has no work to do—*at night* and at the time when he is awake and thinks—and *Thou hast visited* my heart and my thoughts, and *hast tried me* and found in me only good. And from my thoughts no word has proceeded save only according to the tenor of my heart, as he says: *out of no feigned lips*; and this is the meaning of *I have resolved* that *my mouth shall not offend.* And as I am strict with myself, so I warn others of what I see. This is the meaning of what he says: *As for the works of man, by the word of Thy lips*: in (the light of) what Thou hast commanded and warned, I am considering *the works of man* and keeping from them transgressions. And this is the meaning of: *I have marked*[1] *the paths of the violent*: I have prevented a man from walking *in the paths of the violent* and wicked. And similarly, (שמר is used in the verse) "*to keep* (*guard*) *the way of the tree of life*" (Gen. iii. 24), "so that one should not walk in it"; so also "*the keeper of the park*" (Neh. ii. 8). After setting forth before God the uprightness

1. So as to avoid (or cause others to avoid).

of his mouth and heart and deeds, he supplicates God to support his steps lest they stumble before his enemies, and says :

5. **Maintain :** תמיך is an infinitive in the place of an imperative, as "*Keep* (שמור) *the sabbath day*" (Deut. v. 12) ; "*Go* (הלוך) *and call*" (Jer. ii. 2). And he says :

my treadings in Thy paths : meaning, *my treadings* as they go *in Thy paths*, and in Thy way do Thou *maintain*.

(so that) my footsteps have not slipped : There is some disagreement as to the reading of the word נמבו (*slipped*). There are some MSS. which *daghesh* the *ṭeth*, and if this be so it will be derived from a double *'ayin* verb ;[2] there are MSS., however, (where the word appears) without the *daghesh*, and then it will be derived from a verb *'ayin waw*.[3]

6. **I have called upon Thee, for Thou wilt answer me, O God :** Therefore *I have called upon Thee* because I trusted in Thee that Thou wouldest answer me and art able to help me. This also is the sense of

Incline Thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.

7. **Make signal :** make distinct, as, "*and I will divide* (make distinct) *in that day*" (Exod. viii. 18) ; "*and we be separated* (made distinct), *I and Thy people, from all the people*" (*ibid.* xxxiii. 16).

Thy loving-kindnesses,

O Thou that savest them that put their trust (in Thee) :

He says : Thou, who art a *Saviour* of *them that trust*, separate and cause *Thy loving-kindnesses* to pass

From those that rise up at Thy right hand : from those men who *rise up against Thy right hand*, for all know the sovereignty is mine from Thee, and those who are rebelling against me rebel against Thee.

8. **Keep me as the pupil** (אישון) **of the ball of the eye :** as a man guards the *pupil* of his *eye*—that is, the black part through which the light (passes). It is called the אישון (lit. *little man*), because the image of a man is seen in it ; and the *waw* and *nun*[4] mark the

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2. *i.e.* נָמֹטוּ is from a verb מטט. 3. *i.e.* נָמֹטוּ, from מוט.

4. *i.e.* the termination ־וּן.

diminutive, because the image is diminutive; so also the ן of שִׁבְתֹּן (*sabbath keeping*), with the idea of emphasising its holiness. So also, with the addition of *yodh*, אבינן in 2 Sam. xiii. 20. אישׁן is in the *construct* before בת, and (with it) forms one expression; בת (lit. *daughter*) is a substantive, (denoting) the eyeball through which the light (passes), while *pupil* is a descriptive term because the image of a man is seen in it.

And[5] **hide me in the shadow of Thy wings,**

9. **From the wicked that spoil me:** Keep me from the enemies who spoil me. The word זי is in meaning the same as אשר; and so (we find): "*He against whom* (זי) *we have sinned*" (Isaiah xlii. 24).

My soul's enemies that compass me about: Keep me from *my enemies* who *encompass* and surround *me against my soul*, meaning, "to take my life."

10. **With their fat they have enclosed their mouth;**

they speak proudly.

Their great sleekness has *enclosed* their *mouth*. By reason of their great luxury they *speak proudly*.

11. **At our steps:** אֲשֻׁרֵינוּ, with a *daghesh* in the *shin*; and so: "*if my step* (אֲשֻׁרִי) *has turned aside from Thy way*" (Job xxxi. 7).

now have they surrounded us: The *Kethib* (סבבוני = *they have surrounded me*) is written with *yodh*, but the *Keri* reads with *waw* (סבבונו = *they have surrounded us*); (the expression) is plural (*us*) as referring to himself and his friends who collected together with him as he fled before Saul, and singular as referring to himself, for he is the principal. And he says: *our steps*, because when they have come to know our way in which we go *now they have surrounded us*, (*i.e.*) at once they pursue us and surround us.

They set their eyes to cast us down in the earth: *They set their eyes* upon our way *to cast* their net in *the earth* to take us.

12. **He is like a lion that is greedy of his prey,**

As it were a young lion lurking in secret places:

He is like, singular, of Saul. He says, as he said of him in the Psalm *Concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite* (vii. 3): "*Lest he tear my soul like a lion.*"

5. *And* is added by the MS. here; *MT* omits.

13. **Arise, O Lord:** when he comes to pursue and tear me.

Confront him and cast him down: so that he shall not have the strength to harm me.

Deliver my soul from the wicked, Thy sword: *i.e. from the wicked* which is *Thy sword*, as it is said (Isaiah x. 5): "*Ho, Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger*," etc.; for the sword, and escape from it, is all from Thee; as it is written, "*I have wounded, and I heal*" (Deut. xxxii. 39).

14. **From men, Thy hand, O Lord:** And deliver my soul *from men* who are *Thy hand*: he means, "(who are) Thy stroke," as "*Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon*" (Exod. ix. 3). Just as he speaks of them as *Thy sword*, he speaks of them as *Thy hand*.

From men of the world: *from men* who are of this world, whose whole desire and delight is in this world,

whose portion is in (this) life,

And whose belly Thou fillest with Thy treasure:

Their portion is in the *life* of this world, for they look not to the world to come, but with *Thy treasure* and Thy bounty *Thou fillest their belly* in this world.

(Their) children are satisfied: And whose children *are satisfied* by their life with them.

And they leave the rest of their substance for their babes: *i.e.* after their death, and these are their children's children. In the Haggadic interpretation (Babli, *Berakhoth* 61 *b*) the verse is interpreted in reference to Rabbi Akiba and his companions, martyred under the Roman government:[6] the ministering angels said before the Holy One—Blessed be He!—"Lord of the world, *From men, Thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world?*" The Holy One—Blessed be He!—answered them: "*Their portion (is) in life*; their portion is in the life of the world to come!"

15. **As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness:** says David. The wicked have no delight in the world to come, but it

6. Akiba apparently was executed in 132 A.D., after several years' imprisonment. The probable cause was his refusal to recognise certain Roman (anti-Jewish) enactments, on religious grounds. Though he recognised Bar-Kokba as the promised Messiah, it is improbable that he took any overt part in the rebellion, which was finally suppressed in 135. See *JE*, *s.v. Akiba ben Joseph*, i. 304 ff.

is not so with me, for I am looking forward to and hoping to see *Thy face* in the world to come ; and when he says *As for me, in righteousness*, (he means) for *I* am looking forward to and hoping to see *Thy face* in the world to come *in* (reward for the) *righteousness* I do in this world in not eating and living in luxury as they do.

I shall be satisfied : He says, *I shall be satisfied*, balancing *Their children are satisfied* : they *shall be satisfied* in this world, while *I shall be satisfied* in the world to come.

On awaking : for my soul shall not die and sleep ; the opposite of "*they shall sleep a perpetual sleep*" (Jer. li. 39, 57).

(with) Thy likeness : as "*and the likeness of the Lord shall he behold*" (Num. xii. 8), which is the same as saying, "the likeness of the Lord he has seen." (What is meant) is mental apprehension of the glory of God according to the soul's capacity after its separation from the body. Moses our teacher (upon him be peace !) experienced this during the lifetime of the body, which was not the case as regards the rest of the Prophets ; for his intelligence was active, while all the functions of the body were suspended—"*he did neither eat bread nor drink water*" (Exod. xxxiv. 28)—and then the face of the Lord did he behold. This was not so with Elijah, when it is related of him that "in the strength of that meat," as we have interpreted in Kings (1. xix. 8). And as regards the rest of the Prophets, this (experience) will be theirs after death. The learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra has expounded this verse of this world, and he expounds it thus : "I delight to behold *Thy face*, for the *righteousness* which I have observed has become the cause of the delight I feel in seeing *Thy face*. The sense (of the phrase) is the recognition and contemplation of the works of God that they in general are wrought in wisdom and endure for ever. I then am *satisfied* with the enjoyment of *Thy likeness*," being in this unlike the wicked *men of the world*, who are satisfied "when *Thou fillest their belly* ; and this is not in dream, but only *when I* am *awake*. And this beholding is not in visions of the eye, but only in visions of the mind,[7] which are visions of God in truth."

7. lit. *visions of the scale of mind.*

PSALM XIX

1. **For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.**

2. **The heavens declare the glory of God:** There are interpreters (Targumist and others) who take this as like "*Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee*" (Job xii. 8), and "*Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee*" (*ibid.* 7); and so *The heavens declare*, for from the wonders and mighty works which man sees in the heavens he declares the glory of God. And this is what he (means when he) says: *There is no speech nor words; Their voice cannot be heard*, suggesting not that they declare in words, but from what man sees in them the sons of men *declare the glory of God.* We are able to explain *declare* with reference to *the heavens* and *the firmament* themselves, for by their course and circuit in an appointed order the glory of God—Blessed be He!—is seen; and that is the "declaring" and "telling," on the analogy of

> "*He sendeth out His commandment upon earth;*
> *His word runneth very swiftly.*"—(Ps. cxlvii. 15.)

And when he says: *There is no speech nor words* (he means) *no words* like the words of men, but the work they do stands for the words, and constitutes the "declaring" and the "telling"; and so he says: *And their speech to the end of the world.*

The great teacher of righteousness, the great sage our Rabbi Moses,[1] has interpreted (*Guide for the Perplexed*, 2. 5) "*declare*" of *the heavens*, for his opinion and that of the Philosophers is that the spheres are living intelligences, serving God and praising Him with great praise, and singing His glory in great and mighty songs. And so he says: *The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament telleth His handywork*, notwithstanding that the "declaring" and the "telling" are not with mouth and tongue. This is what he (means when he) says: *There is neither speech nor language; Their voice cannot be heard*, but the "declaring" and the "telling" are to them like an image of the words and praises which a man forms in his mind without their actual issuing forth in speech.

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1. *i.e.* Maimonides.

And the firmament telleth His handywork: A repetition, for it is equivalent to *The heavens declare the glory of God*; for the heavens are called "firmament," as it is said (Dan. xii. 3) "*as the brightness of the firmament*," etc.; "*and God set them in the firmament of the heavens*" (Gen. i. 17); that is, according to the view of him who regards this as spoken with reference to the spheres. The learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra has expounded *the firmament* as meaning "the air."

3. **Day to day uttereth speech,**
And night unto night sheweth knowledge.

יביע, *uttereth, i.e.* "speaks," as "*Behold, they utter* (*speak*) (יביעון) *with their mouth*" (Ps. lix. 8); "*Let my lips utter* (תבענה) *praise*" (*ibid.* cxix. 171). The interpretation of the verse is: To-*day* speaks for the sake of the *day* that comes after it, and to-*night* for the sake of the *night* which shall follow it; meaning, in the orderly sequence of the movements (of the heavenly bodies) by *day and night* as it has been since the six days of Creation, so it is now, and so it shall be for ever: nothing is changed or altered. If so, to-*day* tells for the sake of to-morrow, for it is certain that so it shall be.

4. **There is no speech nor words;**
Their voice cannot be heard.

We have interpreted this already.

5. **Their line is gone out through all the earth:**

Their line, i.e. (the line) of their construction; and so (in the verse) "*line upon line*" (Is. xxviii. 10), because the structure is made by stretching out the line. He means that the work of the spheres and constellations *has gone out into all the earth*. And so

And their speech to the end of the world: See, their works are their words.

In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun: *For the sun He hath set a tabernacle* and a place in the spheres. The enumeration refers to the sun because he is the great light and because there obtains to men from him a greater benefit than from the rest of the stars through his light and heat, to men and to the rest of living things and to the plants. And when he says *in them*, he means in *one* of them, as "*he was buried in* (*one of*) *the cities of Gilead*" (Judges xii. 7); and this (location) is the fourth of the seven spheres in which are the seven planets. He says *in them*,

because these stars are fixed in the body of the spheres. And so it says (Gen. i. 17): "*And God set them* in *the firmament of the heaven*," and it does not say *upon* the firmament. And so, too, in the words of our Rabbis of blessed memory (*Midrash Tanḥuma*,[2] Gen. v.), "*The stars are fixed in the firmament like the nails which are fixed in a door.*"

5. **And he is like a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber:** In the morning as he comes out in his brightness and beauty he is *like a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber*, for all rejoice before him; so of the sun, all rejoice at his light. And my revered father—may his memory be blessed!—has interpreted that the Psalmist compares him to *a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber* because the latter is longing to return to his bride, and so the sun returns each day to the place of his brightness. The text also likens him to a strong man, and says:

He rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course: because he does not stumble in his running. And he says, *He rejoiceth as a strong man*, for the strong man rejoices and is glad on going out to war. And so it says in mentioning the strength of a horse: "*he rejoiceth in his strength: He goeth out to meet the armed men*" (Job xxxix. 21); so the sun rejoices in his going forth. His rising and shining and brightness are the rejoicing and gladness.

7. **His going forth is from the end of the heaven**—*i.e.* from the east:

And his circuit over the ends of it: *Over* all the *ends of* the heaven is his course. And he says: *And his circuit*, the interpretation being "his round," as "*the cycle* (round) *of the year*" (Exod. xxxiv. 22), because he goes round the (four) quarters[3] and returns to the place of his rising, as Solomon says (Ḳoh. i. 6): "*He goeth toward the south and roundeth unto the north*," because his course in a day is seen in the south quarter, and he proceeds to the west, and rounds the north quarter at night until he returns in the morning to the quarter from which he rose. And so, in the words of our Rabbis of blessed memory (Babli, *'Erubin* 56*a*), "He proceeds towards the south by day and goes round to the north at night." This, however, is in appearance only; for his course inclines toward the south side, but does not go to the angle of the south. But according to Astronomy,[4] this

2. For the *Midrash Tanḥuma* on the Pentateuch, *cf. RWS*², 91 f.
3. *sc.* of heaven.
4. Hebrew חכמת התכונה.

is not said of the cycle of the day, but of the year, because he (the sun) inclines southwards in winter and to the north in summer, and this is apparent to the eyes and clear and certain. And so, in the words of our Rabbis of blessed memory, in the *Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer*[5] (ch. 6): "He goes towards the south in the *Tekuphah* of Tisri[6] and in the *Tekuphah* of Tebeth,[7] and goes round to the north at the *Tekuphah* of Nisan[8] and the *Tekuphah* of Tammuz."[9]

And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof: for it is the same sun in all the world, and that although he is not equally in every place. And he says: *And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof*, but does not say *And there is nothing hid from the light thereof*, for man is able to hide from (the sun's) light, but not from his heat; even in his innermost chamber (the sun's) heat reaches him. And the learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra expounds: *And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof*, "for the sun gives heat in the world just as the heart produces warmth in the body, as Physiology proves; and he is (gives) life to all bodies." If this is right, the interpretation will be: *There is nothing hid* from the benefit of *his heat.*

8. **The Law of the Lord:** Why does he join the idea of the Law with that of the sun? His meaning is, that as the heavens and the sun and the spheres are witnessing to and declaring the glory of God and His wisdom, so the Law and the Commandments which He has commanded His people Israel witness to His wisdom and uprightness, as it says (Deut. iv. 8), "(*What great nation is there*) *that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this Law?*" And further he says that as the heavens and the sun benefit the world, and through them the world continues to exist, so is *the Law*, which is *perfect* and *restores the soul*, and upon which (depends) the preservation of the soul as the preservation of the world (depends) upon the sun; for the soul in the body is as a stranger in a foreign land who has none to help or assist him, for the agents which minister to the body[10] are for

5. The *Pirke de R. Eliezer*, now available in an English translation, with notes, etc., by G. Friedlander (London, 1916).
6. = the autumnal equinox (September 23, about).
7. = the winter solstice (December 22).
8. = the vernal equinox (March 21).
9. = the summer solstice (June 21). *Tekuphah* is used in these connexions as a technical term denoting the "turn" or "cycle" of a season of the year, which is divided into four *Tekuphoth*. It is the same word as that rendered "circuit" in v. 7 above.
10. lit. *the helpers of the body.*

the most part such as follow after the appetites, and she (the soul) is as a solitary one and captive amongst them. So also says Solomon, who compares her to a poor wise man (Koh. ix. 15). And notice *the Law restoreth the soul* in that it teaches man the right way and draws him away from worldly desires and from many stumbling-blocks. And notice it *restoreth the soul* from captivity and confinement to her (rightful) birth and the place of her glory. And David declares in respect of the Law and the commandments and the judgments, their truth and uprightness. Now *the Law* (תורה, lit. *teaching*) is the orderly setting forth of the commandment with reference to the manner of its performance; and this (may be understood) from the general sense of such passages as "*I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers* (מורי)" (Prov. v. 13); "*and to teach* (להורות) *He hath put in his heart*" (Exod. xxxv. 34); for (the Torah) teaches the ordering of a thing, as "*the law* (Torah) *of the beast and of the fowl*" (Lev. xi. 46); "*the law of the leper*" (*ibid.* xiv. 2); "*the law of her that beareth*" (*ibid.* xii. 7); "*the law of him that hath an issue*" (*ibid.* xv. 32); '*the law of the Nazirite*" (Num. vi. 21). Nevertheless the book (itself) is called by the name of *the Law* (Torah) from Genesis to Deuteronomy,[11] as is written (Deut. xxxi. 9): "*And Moses wrote this Law*"; "*Take this book of the Law*" (*ibid.* 26); (this is) because it narrates the history of Creation and also narrates the affairs of the Fathers; it likewise sets forth every single one of the things which teach about God: that He is the founder of the world, of His goodness and of the beings created by Him, and His providence in the case both of the good and the evil. He mentions the *commandments* also—that is, what God commanded (man) to do in the ways of the service of God and love of Him, as of a master who gives commandment to his servant. And *the testimony*—that is, what was testimony between Israel and God, that they had accepted Him for (their) God, and He had accepted them for a peculiar people; *cf.* "*the ark of the testimony*" (Exod. xxv. 22); "*the tent of the testimony*" (Num. xvii. 23). For the commandments about which Israel received commands—these are the testimony, and also the tables which had on them the Ten Words, which contain (are) the whole Law entirely; and these Words were a great testimony to Israel when they saw His glory on Mount Sinai in the thunderings and lightning; and that great sight was the testimony to them and their children for ever. So also the observance of the Sabbath and the festivals is to them a testimony and a sign and memorial;

11. lit. "from *Bereshith* (*In the beginning*) to *in the sight of all Israel*" (Deut. xxxiv. 12).

the (year of) release also, and the jubilee—all is a testimony to them and their children for ever; as it says, "*for all the earth is Mine*" (Exod. xix. 5); "*they are My servants*" (Lev. xxv. 55). He says: *the precepts of the Lord* in respect of the commandments of the understanding which God has ordained and put in the heart; and about these the understanding teaches. He says *fear* because it is the beginning of the commandments and their root; for the servant, unless he fear the master, will not do his behests, and perfect fear is in secret. He says also *judgments*—that is, the rules (that are to be observed) between a man and his fellow. Now it is to be noticed he has mentioned for us all the different kinds of commandments except "statutes" (חקים). The reason is that he applies to them (such epithets as) *perfect*, *restoring the soul*, *sure*, *making wise the simple*, *right*, *rejoicing the heart*, *pure*, *enlightening the eyes*, *clean*, *true*, *righteous altogether*, *to be desired*, and *sweet*; all which it is only admissible to apply to the commandments whose reason is clear and apparent; whereas the "statutes," such as those regarding the eating of swine's flesh and wearing mixed stuffs and the like, whose reason is not clear to all—how could it be said of them that they are *to be desired*, are *sweet* and *pure*? And although they are such to him to whom their reasonableness is apparent, yet this is not apparent to the great majority of men. And he says:

is perfect: because it is altogether complete; not one thing is lacking in it of all the things a man needs in this world and in the world to come. And he says:

restoring the soul: in the sense we have interpreted. He says also:

The testimony of the Lord is sure: for there is no falsehood in it; for the Glory[12] rested on Israel in the sight of all Israel, there was none to contradict or gainsay. And he says:

making wise the simple: For all the things of the Tabernacle (embodied) wonderful wisdom; for no (mere) thing(s) were the lamp-stand and the altars and the curtains.[13] And so all the things (*sc.* of the Tabernacle) entirely teach of wisdom, so that the wise call it (the Tabernacle) the middle world, for it is a

12. *i.e.* the cloud of Glory, symbolising the divine Presence, which visibly overshadowed the Tabernacle; *cf.* Exod. xxxiii. 9 f., etc.
13. *i.e.* they possessed a higher significance than mere utility.

likeness of the upper world and of the little (lower)[14] world. So also the observance of the Sabbath is a (source of) great wisdom, for on its account man will investigate the question of the world's renewal and all the work of creation, and that (results in) Natural Science. It (Scripture) says also of the Law (Deut. iv. 6): "*for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of all the people*," etc. Again, it says (*ibid.*): "*Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*" Yet although he distributes these attributes and says of the *Law* that it is *perfect* and *restores the soul*, and of the *testimony* that it is *sure*, *making wise the simple*, and similarly of the rest, all share the attributes. He does not apply this attribute to one (only); the same applies also to the other, except that each attribute is attached closely to the substantive nearest it; and that it is necessary to study it in the light of the attribute in accordance with the way we have interpreted and shall interpret.

9. **The treasures of the Lord:** We should have interpreted פקודי as "commandments" in accordance with its Targum, only that he speaks afterwards of *the commandment of the Lord*; so we interpret פקודי here on the analogy of "*And the food shall be for a store* (מקרון)" (Gen. xli. 36), where the meaning is that of treasuring and depositing. They are the things about which reason teaches. He says of them also that they

are right: There is in them no perversion nor crookedness, for if they were not so reason would not be teaching concerning them. And for this cause they

rejoice the heart: for the wise man rejoices over his understanding; and when it gains control over the body and leads it in the ways of understanding there is no joy in the world like that joy, which is the joy of the soul. For this reason he says *rejoicing the heart*, and does not say rejoicing "man," for man rejoices in the lusts of the world; but the understanding—that is, the heart—rejoices only in the ways of understanding. And so it says (Ps. cxix. 111): "*For they are the rejoicing of my heart.*" And he says:

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14. The "little" world is the inferior or transient world on the plane of present physical existence; the "middle" world is the central o celestial world; the "upper" or supernal world is the spiritual world Here the Tabernacle is regarded as belonging to the central or celestia world, and as such exhibiting a certain relationship both to the sphere below itself (the earthly) and to that above itself (the spiritual); *cf.* Hebrews viii. 5.

The commandment of the Lord is pure: Every single *commandment* wherever it is is *pure* and bright without any alloy: and it

enlightens the eyes: because people who are without the commandments walk in darkness, for the commandments give light to the heart and are the steps by which to ascend to the great Glory.

10. **The fear of the Lord is clean:** with reference to the things a man does in secret or without their being known, like theft, or falsifying measures and weights, and such like; and these are the things about which it is said, "*But thou shalt fear thy God, I am the Lord*" (Lev. xix. 11, 12, 14, 32; xxv. 17, 36, 43). And the *fear* which is *clean* is without dross; for a man will refrain from performing wicked deeds which are public from fear of men; but such metal is not pure, for there is alloy in it; but if from performing secret things a man refrains by reason of the fear of God only, that *fear* is *clean*, for in it there is no alloy. And he says:

enduring for ever: because these are commandments which are limited as regards place and time, while the things which stand in *the fear of the Lord* endure for ever. They have no time-limit. Or he says *endure for ever* with reference to the whole Law, inasmuch as God did not appoint it for a time only, but it is for ever and ever. It is not as the unbelieving Nazarenes say when they assert that the Law which was given on Mount Sinai was valid only for a time, until the advent of Jesus the Nazarene; that unto his time it was carnal, while after his advent he commanded it to be understood spiritually; but their words are windy, empty, and vain. For the commandments, which they say are figurative and not to be understood according to their literal sense, God enjoined explicitly and not by way of figure. Such being the case, no one would understand the rest of the commandments in a figurative sense, but according to their literal meaning; for if the commandments were figurative they would be uncertain; one would say that the hidden meaning is such and such, and another would say it is so and so; but the Scripture says (Deut. xxx. 11) "*For this commandment which I command thee this day is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off.*" And if there had been in the commandments hidden meanings, and if they were not to be understood in their literal sense, then they would be "hard" and "far off."

The judgments of the Lord are true, righteous altogether: Already we have interpreted the "judgments" as being the regulations (which govern the relations) between a man and his fellow, and they are all words of *truth* open to the eyes, and they

are all *righteous altogether*—in none of them is there injustice. There are some, however, who explain the reason for his juxtaposition of the Law and the sun as designed to shew the benefit derived from it (the Law) as greater than that of the sun ; for there are some things which the sun injures, but the Law is beneficial in all matters, and therefore he says *the Law of the Lord* is *perfect* ; it is complete, for in all the ways of this world and the world to come men find benefit in it. And he says *restoring the soul*, for as for the sun, when a man rests in its heat too much, he may be seized with a fatal illness, as it says of Jonah (iv. 8), "*And the sun beat upon the head of Jonah that he fainted.*" The Law, however, is not so, for it *restoreth* the *soul* to the body, which is preserved by it. It happens also sometimes that the sun enters into a man's brain and he goes mad ; but the Law is not so, but *giveth understanding to the simple.* Also when a man remains (exposed) to the sun much, he is fearful of heat ; but not so is it with *the treasures of the Lord*, for they *rejoice the heart.* As for the sun, when a man looks at its body intently his eyes grow dim, but it is not so with *the commandment of the Lord*, for it is *pure, giving light to the eyes.* The clouds conceal the sun ; *the fear of the Lord*, however, *is clean* and bright, and nothing conceals nor hides it. The sun gives light by day, but not by night ; *the fear of the Lord abideth for ever.* The light and heat of the sun are not equal all through the day, for till midday it increases and from midday and onwards it decreases ; but it is not so with *the judgments of the Lord*, for they are *true, righteous altogether*, and do not contradict one another.

11. **More to be desired are they than gold :** He says that the words of the Law and the commandments are *to be desired more than gold.*

Yea, than fine gold—that is, the good and purified gold ; but this is

(which is) superior (רב) : as "*to every superior person* (רב) *of his house*" (Esther i. 8)—because it is great in estimation and distinction. Or the interpretation of רב will be of number (*much*) ; and the sense of רב will then be applicable to both *gold* and *fine gold*, for men desire money, *much gold and fine gold.* There are interpreters (Ibn Ezra, and others beside him) who take פז as meaning precious stones, and these also man desires ; but those who have understanding desire the Law and wisdom more. So also says Solomon (Prov. iii. 15) : "*And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her.*" For money is in this world and not in the world to come, while wisdom is both of this

world and the world to come. And money is stolen, or man is robbed of it, or he loses it by sea or by land ; but wisdom cannot be stolen nor taken in robbery, nor is it lost by those that possess it ; money, on the other hand, if a man gives it away or trades with it, he has none left to give ; but if a man teaches another wisdom it does not leave his hand, but he increases in wisdom. Behold, then, the words of the Law and wisdom are *more to be desired* by the intelligent *than gold, yea, than much fine gold.*

And (are) sweeter than honey and the honeycomb: for *honey* is the food which is sweeter to man than any other ; yet notwithstanding, if he continues to eat it, it does him harm and causes him to vomit ; and food profits him (only) for the time being ;[15] but it is not so with wisdom, for, however much he increases therein, she will benefit him, and continue to benefit him for ever. And, as he says, they are *to be desired.* And by whom are they to be *desired, and* to whom are they *sweet*? To the wise and God-fearing. Therefore he says :

12. **Moreover, by them is Thy servant warned:** meaning, I also am of them ; although I am not among the wise, I am *Thy servant* and tremble at Thy commandments and am *warned by them*, and they are *desired* by *and are sweet* to me. Also I know that

In keeping them there is great gain: Apart from the sweetness and the pleasure the wise man finds *in them*, the wise soul would pine and be eager for wisdom, even though it had not this recompense, for it is the nature of the wise soul to long for wisdom, just as it is natural for the soul to long for sweet food. Such being the case, the wise busy themselves in Torah-study and in wisdom by nature, although they do not look for recompense in it. And David says: *In keeping them there is great gain*—more even than the desire. For to me and to the wise who desire them there is still further in the observance of them *great reward*, because Thou dost deal bountifully with those who observe the commandments both in this world and in the world to come ; but the real reward is for the world to come. Therefore the reward is called עקב רב ;[16] for as the heel (עקב) is the end of the body, so the reward is the end of work, and man's work is not finished until the day of his death.

15. lit. *according to season* (*hour*).
16. Translated *great gain.* The root meaning of עקב is *heel* ; then fig. the meaning *consequence, result* = *gain, reward* is reached.

13. **Who can discern his errors?**
Clear Thou me from hidden faults.

It is true that my heart and will are directed towards Thy commandments, but this I ask of Thee, that Thou *clear me from hidden faults*, for *his errors who can discern?* for there is no one who knows and discerns all, for somewhere or other he *errs* and the matter is *hidden* from his eyes; and for this I make request, that Thou punish me not for my *hidden faults*, but that Thou *clear me* from them.

14. **Keep back Thy servant also from sins of passion;**
Let them not have dominion over me:

I seek of Thee further a great request, greater than this I have asked, viz. that Thou hold me back from sins of *passion*, that they get not the *rule over me* and that my (evil) nature do not overpower me. For I am on the watch with all my strength, and do Thou assist me lest the evil impulse rule over me. For the Holy One—Blessed be He!—assists him whose heart is fixed, as He says to Abimelech (Gen. xx. 6): "*and I also withheld thee from sinning against Me.*" (The word) זְדִים is a noun, not an adjective; then זד (*passion*) will be a noun of the form of רָאשׁ (*poverty*) in "*poverty and riches*" (Prov. xxx. 8) and of אֵל in "*It is in the power* (אֵל) *of my hand*" (Gen. xxxi. 29).

then shall I be perfect: אֵיתָם (here) is written with *yodh* after *aleph*, but quiescent—as it compensates for the *daghesh* without *yodh*.[17] *Cf.* (יִמַּד in) "*it cannot be measured* (יִמַּד)" (Hos. ii. 1); (יָמַס in) "*and every heart of man shall melt* (יִמַּס)" (Is. xiii. 7). There is in it also a hidden meaning, for the numerical value of *yodh* is ten, and in the Ten Words was the Law given, and they are its perfection and completeness. He says: then when Thou shalt *clear me* from my *errors* and help me so that *sins of passion* have not control over me, then I shall be perfect and whole.

Then I shall be clear from great transgression: פֶּשַׁע (*transgression*) is worse than זדון (*passion*); seeing that the sins of passion arise from his appetite in unchastity, he is a transgressor in so far as he acts wilfully; but פשע רב (*great transgression*) implies one who rebels against his Lord, whose command he despises, and he

17. *i.e.* אֵיתָם = אֵתָם.

commits the transgression although he has no actual desire thereto. Also he who is habituated in *sins of passion* will fall[18] into rebellion; therefore, says David: If Thou wilt *clear me* from my *errors* and help me against *sins of passion* so that they *have not dominion over me*—if so, I shall never be a wilful sinner; and if I am no longer a wilful sinner, surely I shall not be a transgressor (פושע); and this is what (he means when) he says: *Then I shall be clear from great transgression.* And the meaning of רב here is "great," for the greatest of evil deeds and transgressions is rebellion. And after he has made this the subject of his prayer, he asks God to receive his prayer.

15. **May the words of my mouth be acceptable:** *i.e.* what I say *before Thee* with *my mouth*,

and the meditation of my heart in Thy sight: And what I do not say with *my mouth*, but think in *my heart*—and thought is *the meditation* of *the heart*—even so, *let them be acceptable.* For man thinks in his heart many things which he cannot frame to speak thus with his lips, therefore David says (Ps. li. 17): "*O Lord, open Thou my lips*"; and Solomon says (Prov. xvi. 1): "*but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.*"

O Lord, my Rock: *i.e.* my Strength, in whom I put my trust in my requests,

and my Redeemer: from errors and sins of passion.

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18. lit. *will come into the power of.*

PSALM XXII

1. **For the Chief Musician. Set to "The Hind of the Morning." A Psalm of David.** There are those who say (Rashi, and others beside him) that אילת השחר (*hind of the morning*) is a kind of musical instrument. There are also interpreters (Targumist, Menaḥem,[1] and others besides) who explain אילה from (אילותי in) *My succour* (אילותי), *haste Thee to help me* (*infra*, 20), meaning that this Psalm was uttered in the strength of the *morning's* dawn.[2] And some interpret אילה as the name of the morning star. So we have in the words of our Rabbis of blessed memory (Jerushalami, *Berakhoth* i. 1; *Yoma* iii. 2): "They call the morning star *Ayyeleth*." They say also (*ibid.*; *Canticles Rabbah* 6; *Esther Rabbah* 10 end; and *Shoḥer Tob*, *ad loc.*) that this Psalm was uttered with reference to Esther and to Israel, who were in exile at that time. Some also interpret it of David while he was still a fugitive before Saul. The correct view is that the title *The Hind of the Morning* is used of the congregation of Israel while in this (present) exile, and the end of the Psalm proves this. It calls her a *hind*, just as the comparison is applied to her in the Song of Songs (ii. 7; iii. 5): "*among the roes or among the hinds of the field*." The meaning also of השחר (*the morning*) is beauty and brightness, as it says concerning her (*ibid.* vi. 10): "*Who is she that looketh forth as the morning?*" And now she is in darkness in this exile, as if forgotten and abandoned; and she cries out from exile:

2. **My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?** (The address) in the singular refers to the people of Israel as a whole, for they were as one man in exile and of one mind. *My God, my God*: the repetition is after the manner of those who call out and cry, as: "*Hear me, O Lord, hear me*" (1 Kings xviii. 37); "*Abraham, Abraham*" (Gen. xxii. 11); "*Moses, Moses*" (Exod. iii. 4). Israel says also אלי (*my God* or *my Strength*), meaning: Thou wast my Strength and my Rock before, and now, why hast Thou forsaken me?

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1. *i.e.* Menaḥem b. Saruḳ, Spanish philologist of the tenth century and compiler of a famous Dictionary in Hebrew.
2. lit. *ascent*.

(Why art Thou) far from helping me: and why art Thou so *far from helping me* when Thou hearest

(When Thou hearest) the words of my roaring?

3. **O my God, I call by day:** *i.e.* in the day;

but Thou answerest not;

And at night: and in the night *I call*;

but there is no rest for me: from my crying, and Thou dost not *answer*. דמיה (*rest*) is a noun, not an adjective.

4. **And Thou continuest holy:** How, then, is it that *Thou dost not answer* now, seeing that *Thou continuest holy* and abidest for ever? *Thou* hast been so often

(Thou) the praises of Israel: for they praised Thee when Thou didst deliver them out of their troubles. For praise and thanksgiving shall be (given) for deliverance. How is it that Thou dost not save him now? for *Thou* abidest for ever, and as Thy power was then, so is Thy power now. (*Thou*) *continuest*, abidest that is, eternally; and so, "*Thou, Lord, continuest for ever*" (Lam. v. 19).

5. **Our fathers trusted in Thee:**

They trusted: for many times *did our fathers trust in Thee*,

and Thou didst deliver them from their trouble, and their confidence did not prove false. The repetition of *trusted* is (intended) to emphasise the (thought of) confidence, for they had confidence in none other but *in Thee*; and so

6. **They cried unto Thee, and escaped:** not to other gods. Therefore

In Thee they trusted, and were not ashamed: They shall not be put to *shame* by reason of their ruin.

7. **But I am a worm:** I am despised in the sight of the nations as the *worm*,

and no man: and I am not a *man* in their sight, but

A reproach of men and the despised of the people: (Thus are) we in exile;

8. **All that see me laugh me to scorn:** This is true of Israel, for all who *see* them *laugh* them to *scorn*;

They shoot out with the lip: and *shoot out* upon them *with the lip* words of mockery and insult;

They shake the head: and *they shake the head* at them. *They shoot out* (יפטירו): *i.e.* they send out words with the lip. (This meaning may be illustrated) from "*the shooting out* (פוטר) *of water*" (Prov. xvii. 14). "Sending out" applies also to water, as "*He sendeth forth springs*" (Ps. civ. 10); and it applies also to words, as "*Thou sendest out thy mouth to evil*" (*ibid.* l. 19). *cf.* also the Targum of והאנשים שלחו (*and the men were sent away*) (Gen. xliv. 3), which is וגוברייא אתפטרו.

9. **One that is committed to the Lord:** גָּלוּי[3] (*one that is committed*) is an adjective of similar form to (חֹם) in "*bread that is hot* (חֹם)" (1 Sam. xxi. 7); (and to חֹם in) "*the way of the Lord is a stronghold to the upright* (חֹם)" (Prov. x. 29). (One is meant) who turns his ways and his requests and prayers unto the Lord;

Him He will deliver, He will rescue him:

seeing He delighteth in him: *seeing* that the Lord *delighteth in him* and hears his prayer. *cf.* "*If the Lord delight in us*" (Num. xiv. 8). Or its interpretation may be: "*seeing he*, man, *delighteth* in God"; as "*Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him*" (Ps. xci. 14). It is equivalent to saying: "Many a time have we seen and heard this, that when one turns his ways and prayer unto God, *He delivers him.* If this be so, why dost Thou not save us, for, as for ourselves, our eyes (look) unto Thee?"

10. **Thou art He that drew me forth out of the womb;**
Thou didst make me trust upon my mother's breasts:

גּוֹחִי (*that drew me forth*) = מוֹצִיאִי (*that caused me to issue forth*), as "*And thou didst burst forth* (וָתָּגַח) *with thy rivers*" (Ezek. xxxii. 2). He says: "How is it that Thou dost not save us while we confess Thee and know and acknowledge that strength is from Thee, and that Thou art He that helps and brings to the birth and causes the babe, whose sustenance is received only at the hands of others, to *trust upon* its *mother's breasts*? And Thou

3. lit. *devolutus.*

art He who *makes* him *trust* also, so that gradually he will grow and his strength and (power of) use increase in him until he can seek his sustenance of himself, and the man is mature[4] in marvellous wisdom—from his *mother's breasts* until he grows up. And all is by the direction of a Director and the guidance of a Guide, and not as is asserted by those who say that everything is by nature and chance, without the direction of a Director and the guidance of a Guide. We also are the people who confess Thee.

11. **Upon Thee I was cast from the womb:** for Thou art He who fed my mother with her sustenance, so that she could feed and bring me up. *I was cast*: the one who actually "casts" is the father and the mother,[5] for he (the child) has not himself the understanding to cast his burden upon God.[6] And so

From my mother's womb my God art Thou: for they confess Thee on my behalf.

12. **Be not far from me:** Now also in exile *be not far from me*; since Thou hast been nigh me *from my mother's womb* as I grew up, *be not far from me* in the time of my trouble;

for trouble is near: but if Thou art near it will be far off.

For there is none to help: apart from Thee.

13. **Bulls have surrounded me:** This is the *trouble* that *is near* at hand, that *bulls have compassed me*—a figure for lusty and powerful and wicked enemies. The interpretation of (רבים is)

mighty (ones): that is, great in strength. So also

strong ones of Bashan: *Bashan* is a district in the land of Israel, a district of fat and rich pasture, and the cattle that feed there are fat and strong. He compares the wicked enemies with them. And so it says (Amos iv. 1) in a figure "*kine of Bashan*," with reference to the women who oppress the poor, who crush the needy.

have beset me around (כתרוני): equivalent to *have surrounded me*; just as the crown (כתר) surrounds (encircles) the head. And so we have (Judges xx. 43): "*they beset* (כתרו) *Benjamin around*."

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4. lit. *great*.
5. Apparently regarded as one entity (the sing. "one who casts" is used).
6. *cf.* the idea of Christian sponsorship.

14. **They open their mouth against me:** These bulls just mentioned *open their mouth against me* and tear me. Although it is not the way of bulls to tear, yet these bulls are like

A tearing and roaring lion: *i.e.* a *lion* which is *tearing and roaring.* אריה (*lion*) (here) lacks the *kaph* of comparison. Similarly we have, "*Judah is a lion's whelp*" (Gen. xlix. 9); "*Issachar is a strong ass*" (*ibid.* 14); "*Naphtali is a hind let loose*" (*ibid.* 21), and such like. The roaring of the lion after he has torn is for joy and pride, as (says) the text (Amos. iii. 4): "*Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den if he have taken nothing?*" So it is with enemies; after killing and plundering us, they rejoice and behave as insolent boasters.

15. **I am poured out like water:** For fear of them *I am*, figuratively, *poured out like water*—as if I had been melted,

and all my bones are parted asunder: Bones are more substantial than water, and therefore he says of them *they are parted asunder*, for they are parted asunder from the ligaments by which they are bound one to the other. So also, "*Our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol*" (Ps. cxli. 7).

My heart has become like melting wax: דונג is the wax which is easily *melted* by heat.

in the midst of my bowels: All the inner parts are called *bowels.*

16. **My strength is dried up like a potsherd:** My revered father of blessed memory, quoting the words of our Rabbis of blessed memory (Babli, *Baba Kamma* 3*b*), wrote כחי (= *my strength*), כיחי, *i.e.* "*his phlegm* (כיחי) *and his effort to remove it.*" And some have explained it (one of the Geonim,[7] according to the testimony of Ibn Ezra) as a metathesis equivalent to חכי (= *my palate*), as though he said, I am not able to speak, just as when he says "*and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws.*" The learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra expounds כחי (*my strength*) literally: "because man's life consists in the moisture implanted at birth which binds the whole together and sustains the body. He calls (this) moisture by the name *strength* (כח). And see (he says) it *is dried up*, as happens to an old man advanced in years."

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7. See Ps. v. 1, note.

And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws (מלקוחי מדבק): The servile *lamedh*[8] is wanting (here). The regular usage would be לְמַלְקוחי מדבק, for מְדֻבָּק (*cleaveth*) has *ḳames*, and is not in construction with *jaws*.[9] The *jaws* are the palates above and below the tongue. The expression is used (here) in the same way as "*and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth*" (Job xxix. 10). The jaws (מלקוחים = "takers") also are so called because they "take" the food during mastication. In the Haggadic interpretation (*Shoḥer Ṭob*): "*and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws*," because my tongue cleaveth to my gullet (throat). Another interpretation: Because I have ceased from the two Laws, the written Law and the oral,[10] as it is said (Prov. iv. 2): "*For I give you good doctrine* (לקח), *forsake ye not my Law*," *i.e.* by reason of the persecution of the exile.[11]

And in the dust of death: meaning, I am as near death as if Thou didst destine me, and I were destined, to be put in the grave, which is *the dust of death.*

Thou settest me: השפחתני is to be understood from (the verse) "*set on* (שפת) *the cauldron*" (2 Kings iv. 38; Ezek. xxiv. 3). In the Haggadic interpretation (*Shoḥer Ṭob*, with slight verbal alteration): "*I am like a stove which is set between two roads on which the travellers do their cooking* (שופתים)."[12]

17. **For there have surrounded me:** They are the enemies, and I am in the midst of them like one who is surrounded by

dogs: from whom there is no way of escape. And (the clause) *For dogs have surrounded me* is to be explained after a figurative manner; and the metaphorical interpretation is

The assembly of evil-doers have encircled me like a lion—my hands and my feet: for *they have encircled me* like *the lion* which makes a circuit with his tail in the forest, and no creature which sees that circle moves out thence for fear of the lion and

8. *i.e.* the preposition ל.
9. מְדֻבָּק (*Hof.* participle) is *absolute*, and ought to be followed by ל; the *construct*, which would naturally depend upon a genitive *immediately* following (without the intervention of a preposition), would be מְדֻבַּק
10. מלקוחים being taken as *dual* of מלקים = לקח (*doctrine*), and *cleaveth to* being interpreted as "cloggeth," "impedeth."
11. *i.e.* the difficult conditions of "exile" have caused the practice of the ora and written Law to fall into abeyance.
12. שפת in late Hebrew = "to set the cooking vessel on the fire."

the terror he inspires, but they fold their hands and their feet, and the lion finds his prey in the midst of his circle. So we in exile are in the midst of a circle from which we cannot emerge lest we fall into the hand of the spoilers ; for if we should escape from the power of the Mohammedans we should fall into the power of the uncircumcised, and so we fold our hands and feet and stand fearful and terror-stricken before them ; for we have no power either to escape on foot or to fight with our hands. Behold, it is just as if our hands and feet were in fetters !

18. **(If) I declare all my strong reasons (of complaint)**
They look and gaze upon me :

Then if I come to declare my troubles before their great ones, arising from the way their underlings oppress me, *they*, the great ones, *look* at me and they *gaze upon me* with the eye of scorn and hatred. *They look* (*upon me*) is here used like "*Look not upon me because I am swarthy*" (Song of Songs i. 6) ; "*that they may look at thee*" (Ezek. xxviii. 17), where the expression (ראוה) has the sense of looking at with contempt and mockery. עצמותי (*my strong reasons*) is used here as in "*Produce your cause, saith the Lord, bring forth your strong reasons* (עצמותיכם)" (Is. xli. 21). There are, however, those who interpret עצמיתי (here) quite literally as from עצם (*bone*), and explain אספר from the sense of מספר (*number*) ; and then its interpretation will be : Because of my great weakness I can count *all my bones* and *they look* and *gaze upon me*, meaning upon my flesh and woeful appearance, and they mock me.

19. **They part my garments among them,**
And for my clothes do they cast lots :

They take our money and the labour of our hands to such an extent that they even *part* our *garments and* our *clothes* and take them *for themselves* and *cast lots for* them.

20. **But Thou, O Lord** when Thou dost see these sorrows—
be not far off : for *Thou* art
My succour, and my strength, and I have put my trust in Thee only ; wherefore
haste Thee to help me.

21. **Deliver my soul from the sword ;** *from the sword* of exile, lest I be exterminated in exile :

My only one from the power of the dog: *Dog*, *lion*, and *wild oxen* are figurative for the kings of the nations of the world among whom we are in exile. And he describes each one in accordance with its importance (greatness). *My only one* is the spirit which is solitary dwelling in houses of clay, and there is nothing else like it; for the lustful soul (נפש) is the body.

22. **Deliver me from the lion's mouth;**
Yea, from the horns of the wild oxen Thou hast answered me.

The *wild ox* will gore with his horns, as it says (Deut. xxxiii. 17): "*With them shall he gore peoples.*" *Thou hast answered me* is equivalent to "Thou wilt answer me," and of this there are many similar examples in the words of prophecy. Or its interpretation may be: Because Thou hast delivered me many times from great troubles, the deliverance from which was like being saved *from the horns of the wild oxen*; and as Thou didst bring me out from the other exiles, so *save me* now *from the lion's mouth.*

23. **I will declare Thy name to my brethren:**
In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.

When Thou shalt deliver me *from the lion's mouth* and *from the horns of the wild oxen*, when Thou dost bring me out of exile, then *I will declare Thy name to my brethren, I will praise Thee in the midst of the congregation. My brethren* are the children of Edom,[13] amongst whom we are in exile. So also the children of Ishmael and the children of Keturah,[14] for all are the children of our father Abraham. Or its interpretation may be: We who are in exile will declare the miracles and wonders God has wrought for us in our exile to the Ten Tribes who are in exile, in refreshment and union, and upon whom the hand of the nations has not pressed heavily[15] as upon us.

24. **Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him;**
All ye of the seed of Jacob, glorify Him:

So shall they say in the time of their deliverance. The interpretation of *ye that fear the Lord* is "ye of Israel," and this division is like "*Ye that fear the Lord, bless ye the Lord*" (Ps. cxxxv. 20); "*house of Levi*" (*ibid.*); "*house of Aaron*" (*ibid.* 19); "*house of Israel*" (*ibid.*). The reason is that each separate

13. Edom here = Rome, as often.
14. Ishmael and Keturah = Islam and Arabia respectively.
15. lit. *tyrannised.*

one is mentioned according to its gradation and significance, and according to its relative nearness to God. Notice also that in this verse he mentions love and fear, for "glory" is equivalent to love, and *those that fear the Lord* from fear will attain to love.

And stand in awe of Him, all ye seed of Israel: *i.e.* those who have not yet attained to love. In the Haggadic interpretation (*Shoḥer Tob*, with a slight verbal alteration) (it is said): "Rabbi Joshua ben Levi[16] says: *Ye that fear the Lord*—these are the fearers of Heaven; Rabbi Samuel bar Naḥmani[17] says: These are proselytes of righteousness in the age to come. Our Rabbis say: *The fearers of the Lord* are the priests, *all the seed of Jacob* are the Levites, and *all the seed of Israel* is to be understood literally."

25. **For He hath not despised:** And so will they say when they give thanks as they come forth from the exile: "When we were in exile *He did not despise nor abhor* our *affliction* wherewith we were *afflicted*."

nor abhorred (שִׁקַּץ): (This word) has the meaning of תועבה (*abomination*), as (Lev. xi. 43): "*Ye shall not make yourselves abominable* (תשקצו)."

the affliction: (עֳנִיהּ here) is a noun having the sense of עני (*afflicted*). Some, however (Targumist, Rashi, and others besides), interpret עניה as the "prayer."

of the afflicted: viz. that which he answers with his mouth,[18] as (Prov. xvi. 1): *the answer* (מענה) *of the tongue*."

Neither hath He hid His face from him;

But when he cried unto Him,

He heard: (שָׁמַע here) is perfect of the verb of the form (חָפֵץ in) "*because he had delight* (חָפֵץ) *in Jacob's daughter*" (Gen. xxxiv. 19).

26. **Of Thee is my praise:** The speaker is every individual Israelite, or else all Israel as one, inasmuch as they are the subject of the Psalm: *my praise*, *i.e.* with which I praise Thee:

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16. A Palestinian Rabbi of the third century (first half), head of the School of Lydda; remarkable for his tolerance and public spirit.
17. A Palestinian Rabbi (born early third century), and a famous Haggadist.
18. As if עניה = "response": Targum renders it צלותהון, "their prayer."

in the great congregation of the nations ; it (*my praise*) is *of Thee*, for Thou hast been to me the occasion of praise because Thou didst deliver me.

My vows—which I vowed—

will I pay before them that fear Him : for all the nations will fear Him then, as he says (*infra*) : *All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord.*

27. **The meek shall eat and be satisfied :**

They shall praise the Lord that seek after Him :

i.e. Israel, because they are *meek*, for the Gentiles have been proud until the time of the redemption of Israel ; so also Israel is identical with *those that seek after Him*, for they are seeking after Him in the exile ; and when they are redeemed they *shall eat and be satisfied* with the spoil of their enemies, and delight themselves —the reverse of what they experienced in exile—and they shall say to them :

Let your heart live : the interpretation of which is on the lines of, "*and the spirit of Jacob lived*" (*ibid.* xlv. 27), the converse of "*and his heart died*" (1 Sam. xxv. 37) ; for the living spirit is in the heart, and when man is in trouble his heart dies, as he (the Psalmist) says (Ps. cix. 22),[19] and when he passes out from trouble to relief, behold, his heart lives. And the significance of

for ever (is) : they shall be no longer in exile, but shall be in their own land, rejoicing and glad of heart, they and their children, for ever.

28. **They shall remember :** The nations (shall remember) the poverty and weakness in which Israel was while in exile ; they shall see the great deliverance.

and all the ends of the earth shall turn unto the Lord,

and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship

before Thee : The Prophet addresses the Name[20] directly.

29. **For the Kingdom is the Lord's :** Then all the Gentiles shall recognise that *the Kingdom is the Lord's.*

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19. "My heart is wounded within me" (Ps. cix. 22 *b*).
20. *i.e.* God.

And He is the ruler over the Gentiles: and then He shall be *ruler over the Gentiles*, as it says (Zech. xiv. 9): "*And the Lord shall be King over all the earth.*"

30. **All the fat ones of earth shall eat and worship:**
All that go down to the dust shall bow before Him,
even he who cannot keep his soul alive.

My revered father of blessed memory explained the verse as having two applications: that the Gentiles—those, that is, who are prosperous and flourishing and who turn to the Lord—shall remain so then, for God will accept them on their repentance, and they *shall eat, and worship God*, and praise Him for all the goodness; but there are some of the Gentiles whom He will not receive, even if they should *bow before Him*—those, namely, who have harried Israel; for they are those *that go down to the dust*, meaning they shall be in Gehenna; neither will God preserve alive the soul of one of them, as the Prophet says (Joel iv. 21): "*I will cleanse—(but of) their blood I do not cleanse.*"[21] For all the evil things they have done to Israel they shall be able to give indemnity, as it says (Is. lx. 17): "*For brass I will bring gold*"; but the blood of man they shall not be able to indemnify, therefore their life shall be (taken) in the place of their life: and this interpretation is correct. The learned Rabbi Abraham,[22] however, has expounded the whole verse in another sense. He says: "*the fat ones of the earth* are those who enjoy themselves in this world, in eating every kind of delicacy;[23] and if they have their delight in this world, in their latter days *they shall worship and bow down* before the angel who gathers their spirit,[24] and not one of them shall be able to save his soul alive. And this is an intimation that their soul shall perish in the world to come, in contradistinction to the meek, of whom he says that *their soul shall live for ever.*" And what he says about (bowing down) "before the angel who gathers their spirit" is Midrashic (interpretation): and so they say in the Haggadic interpretation (Babli,

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21. The application of this verse in the context shews that Kimhi understood it in the sense expounded by Rashi: "Although I will cleanse the Gentiles from all other transgressions which are in their hands, and from the evil deeds which they have committed against Me, yet the blood (which they have shed) of the children of Judah I will not cleanse them of."
22. *i.e.* Abraham ben Ezra.
23. lit. *fatness* (rich food).
24. *i.e.* the angel of death.

Niddah 30 *b* ; *Shoḥer Tob*, with a slight change): "*For to Me every knee shall bow*" (Is. xlv. 23)—that is, at the day of death, as it is said, "*before Him shall they bow, all that go down to the dust.*"

31. **A seed shall serve Him:** Still there is a *seed* that *shall serve Him*—that is, the *seed* of Israel, who serve Him continually.

It shall be counted as the Lord's for the generation(s): It shall be called and *counted* by the name of *the Lord*, and men shall speak of them as "the people of the Lord"; for even though the rest of the nations *should turn unto the Lord*, only Israel shall be called "the people of the Lord," and he alone *shall be counted as the Lord's* to all generations.

32. **They shall come and shall declare:** Those who come up from the exile, who *shall come* from *all the ends of the earth, shall declare*

His righteousness

unto a people which hath been

born of them: to their children *they shall declare His righteousness*,

how He hath done: what He has done for them; for, because these will not have seen the work of the Lord that He did in the case of themselves and their fathers, *they shall declare* it to them.

The uncircumcised have interpreted this Psalm of Jesus (in the sense that) it tells of all the evils which Israel did to him. Lo! the Son cries to the Father out of his troubles and says: *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?* and so all the Psalm. They corrupt[25] the word כארי (*as a lion*) in the clause כארי ידי ורגלי (*as a lion my hands and my feet*), and read כארו (*they pierce*), giving it the meaning (of כרה in) "*if a man shall dig* (יכרה) *a pit*" (Exod. xxi. 33), because they drove nails through his hands and feet when they hanged him. Also the verse *and his soul he hath not kept alive* has led them astray, for they say that this one is God, *before whom all* who *go down to the dust shall bow*, and he did not wish to keep *his soul* alive, because he came down to assume (human) flesh conditionally that they might kill the flesh, and that by this those who *go down* to Gehenna might be saved. So, forsooth, he did not desire to keep *his soul* alive, but surrendered himself into the power of those who slew him. Now

25. lit. *confuse.*

let them hear what is involved in their words![26] They say that he did not wish to keep *his soul alive* nor rescue it from the power of those who slew him. If so, why did he cry: *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? (Why art Thou so) far from helping me?* if he had no desire to be saved? Has he not forgotten the condition (of his taking flesh)? He says also: *but Thou answerest not*, and perhaps does not wish to be answered? And further, if he were really God, he would be able to save himself; and further, when he says *the praises of Israel*, when it is they who are doing him evil? How could he say that they are praising God? Once again he says: *Our fathers trusted in Thee*; and if he was what they allege, he had only one father. Again, this God says of himself that he is *a worm and no man*, forsooth! Lo! he says: *One that is committed to the Lord, him He will deliver, He will rescue him.* If (he spoke) of the (human) flesh, He did not deliver nor rescue him; and if of the Godhead, there was no need of rescue. He says also: *But Thou art He that took me out of the womb—i.e.* he himself it was who brought out *of the womb.* And he says: *I will declare Thy name to my brethren*, although God has no brethren. And notice it is false, for the declaring and praising and thanksgiving are to follow the rescuing, and you know he was not rescued. He also says: *All ye of the seed of Jacob, glorify Him. . . . For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted*, while Israel it was who did him evil; and his *affliction* the Father *despised and abhorred*, and *hid His face from him*, and on *his crying unto Him did* not *hearken.* Behold, all his words are belied. Then he says, *All the kindreds of the nations*, while, as you see, the Jews and the Mohammedans do not believe in him.

26. lit. *let them proclaim to their ear what their mouth speaks!*

PSALM XXIV

1. **A Psalm of David:** David composed this Psalm that they might recite it as they brought the ark to the Most Holy House. And this was after he had offered a burnt-offering on Mount Moriah, and the place had been revealed to him, and he knew that there would be (built) the House of the Lord, as it is written in the Books of Chronicles (I. xxii. 1). And he says:

The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;
The world and they that dwell therein: And although *the earth is the Lord's*, this mountain is called *the mountain of the Lord* and *His Holy Place* (specifically), because it is *His Holy Place* in truth, for it is a habitation (in the earth) corresponding to the Throne of Glory (in heaven). And the expression הארץ (*the earth*) includes the whole of the earth, as (Gen. i. 1) "*the heavens and the earth*"; and the expression תבל (*world*) is equivalent to the inhabited parts; therefore, in connexion with *earth*, he uses the phrase *its fulness*, and with *world* (he uses) *and those that dwell therein.*

2. **For He hath founded it upon (the) seas,**
And established it upon (the) floods:

The earth He has established upon *seas* and *floods* for the sake of the creatures upon it; but *this mountain* He has not founded for all creatures, not even for all the sons of men, but *for the clean of hand and pure of heart*; and it is the seed of *Jacob* who *seek the Lord*, and were bidden to *be clean of hand and pure of heart.* And so they were often, as in the days of Joshua and in the days of the elders who outlived him, even as it says (Josh. xxiv. 31), "*and Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua*"; and so, in the days of the judges all the days of the judges; and in the days of Samuel it says (I Sam. vii. 2), "*All the house of Israel was drawn together after the Lord*"; and in the days of David and Solomon; and so in the days of the rest of the kings who were good. And there has not been one such as this among other people to serve the Name unitedly. Therefore he says that none shall ascend this holy *hill of the Lord* except *the seekers after the*

Lord, and they are the house of Jacob. And in the Haggadic interpretation (*Shoher Tob*, with some verbal change): "*the earth is the Lord's and its fulness*—this is the land of Israel: *for He hath founded it upon* (*the*) *seas and established it upon the floods* (rivers), because it rests upon seven seas and four rivers, and these are the seven seas:[1] the Great Sea, the Sea of Sibhkay, the Sea of Tiberias, the Salt Sea, the Sea of Chulta, the Sea of Chulîthâ, the Sea of Sheryîthî, and the Sea of Hispamia; and these are the four rivers: the Jordan, the Yarmûkh, the Keramyon,[2] and the Pigah."[3] And the interpretation of *upon* (*the*) *seas and upon* (*the*) *floods* is "next to" seas and rivers, as (in the text) (Num. ii. 20), "*and next to him* (*i.e.* Ephraim), *the tribe of Manasseh*." And (it is said) that there is no habitable spot in the world (more than) eighteen days' (journey) distant from the sea, and this is for the provision of moisture for the creatures; and likewise the rivers are for the use (provision) of the creatures; and this is according to what is said (Is. xlv. 18), "*He formed it to be inhabited*," because He established it so that created beings might live in it. And the reason (for so doing) was because it had not been created so from the beginning, but rather (at first) to be entirely under water; for the waters encompassed it on every side as the air encompassed the waters on every side, and the fire encompasses the air on every side. And behold the earth was under the waters, in accordance with the nature He imposes on them; and He did not make it so at first, in order to demonstrate that all is in His hand and that He varies (their) natures at His pleasure. And God commanded that its first division should be uncovered, so that the creatures might live in it; and (so) He says (Gen. i. 9) "*Let the waters under the heaven be gathered unto one place and let the dry land appear*."

3. **Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?**
And who shall stand in His holy place?

Because it is not fitting that every man should ascend it, seeing that it is a place of holiness and repentance.

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1. The Great Sea = the Mediterranean. The Sea of Sibhkay = Merom (Samachonitis). The Sea of Chulta, the Sea of Chulîthâ: the two names are due apparently to dittography, and represent one "sea," viz. the Lake of Chulta, *i.e.* prob the navigable portion of the Orontes up to Antioch. The Lake of Sheryîthî (or Lake of Shilyath): the identification of this is uncertain. The Sea of Hispamia (or Lake of Apamea) = the Lake of Paneas in Northern Galilee.
2. The Keramyon was probably a tributary of the Jordan.
3. The Pigah. The identification of this Palestinian river is uncertain.

4. **The clean of hand and pure of heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,**[4]

And hath not sworn deceitfully: Notice that he indicates in this verse three dispositions in man, *action*, *thought*, and *speech*; and in the three of them the man will be perfect who shall be *clean* in his *actions*, *pure* in his *heart*, and trustworthy in his speech. (The marginal reading) is נפשי (written) with *yodh* (= *my soul*),[4] and is the utterance of God, as (in the verses) (Exod. xx. 7; Deut. v. 11), "*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*"; and נפשו (*His soul*, essence, being) is (equivalent to) His Name. And so it says (in the verse) (Amos. vi. 8), "*The Lord God hath sworn by Himself* (בנפשו)." And the word as written, נפשו, *i.e.* with *waw*, means *his soul*, viz. the swearer's; *a man shall not lift up unto vanity nor swear deceitfully*, but in truth and righteousness. And such swearing is a *mitzvah* to the fearers of the Name, as is said (in the text) (Deut. vi. 13), "*And shalt swear by His Name*"; and another verse says (*ibid.* x. 20), "*The Lord thy God shalt thou fear, Him shalt thou serve, and to Him shalt thou cleave, and by His Name shalt thou swear.*" When these attributes (*i.e.* service, fear, adhesion) are thine, then by His Name shalt thou swear. And so it says (Jer. iv. 2), "*And thou shalt swear 'As the Lord liveth,' in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.*"

5. **Such an one shall receive a blessing from the Lord,**

And righteousness from the God of his salvation: Shall receive (ישא), *i.e.* shall take (יקח), as (Ruth i. 4), "*And they took* (וישאו) *them wives.*" *A blessing* on the analogy of (2 Kings v. 15), "*Take now a blessing* (*present*) *from thy servant.*" Or (the) interpretation may be, One shall take to him (a blessing), as (Gen. xliii. 34), "*Messes from before him were taken to them.*" They who go up into the House of the Lord *shall receive a blessing from the Lord*, because He will give them His blessing and righteousness, and save them from all trouble, and this is *from the God of* his *salvation.*

6. **This is the generation of them that seek Him:** Who shall *ascend into the hill of the Lord and in His Holy Place*, because he is *clean of hand and pure of heart*? This is *the generation of the seekers of the Lord*, and they are Israel. And

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4. The Keri of Ps. xxiv. 4 *b* runs: *And who hath not lifted up My soul unto vanity* (God being the speaker).

this happened in the days of Solomon, who built the House. And the *Kĕthîb* דֹּרְשׁוֹ (*him that seeks Him*) corresponds to דּוֹר (*generation*), which is a collective term, singular ; and the *Ḳeri* דֹּרְשָׁיו (*them that seek Him*) corresponds to the individuals, who are many.

That seek Thy face, (even) Jacob: The singer speaks as to God. These are they who seek *Thy face* in the Holy House, *Jacob*, and they are Israel ; for all the seed of Jacob are called by the name *Jacob*, as (Jer. xxx. 10) "*And thou fear not, O my servant Jacob,*" with other instances besides. And there is no need to supply *seed of* as the interpreters have done. And the word **Selah** I have interpreted in the third Psalm, and there is no need to interpret it in every place where it occurs.

7. **Lift up your heads, O ye gates!** In the Haggadic interpretation (*Shoḥer Ṭob* ; Babli, *Shabbath* 30 *a* ; *Moed Ḳaṭon* 9 *a* ; *Sanhedrin* 107 *b*, and in other places) : "it is clear that the gates were fastened together when Solomon sought to bring in the ark into the house of the Holy of Holies." According to the literal interpretation he seems to speak metaphorically, as (in Ps. xcvi. 11, 12), "*Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof ; let the field exult and all that is in it.*" And so he says, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates!*

And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ;

that the King of Glory may come in: For great glory shall ye receive on the day when *the King of Glory comes into you.* And because the *Glory* rested on the ark, between the two cherubim, he calls it by the name of the Lord, *the King of Glory.* And so (2 Sam. vi. 2), "*Whereupon is called the Name, even the name of the Lord of Hosts that sitteth upon the cherubim.*" And so it (the ark) is called (in Josh. iii. 11) "*The Lord of all the earth*"; and so it is said of it (Num. x. 35) "*Rise up, O Lord,*" (and *ibid.* 36) "*Return, O Lord.*" And so he says of it (in Ps. xlvii. 6) "*God is gone up with a shout.*" And he says *everlasting doors* because hitherto the ark travelled from place to place. It came from the desert to Gilgal, and from Gilgal to Shîloh, and from Shîloh to the land of the Philistines, and from the land of the Philistines to Bethshemesh, and from Bethshemesh to Kirjath Je'arim, and from Kirjath Je'arim to the house of Obed Edom, and from the house of Obed to the City of David.

And now they brought it into a place where it might remain for ever, and therefore he says *everlasting doors.* And so he says (in

the verse) (1 Kings viii. 13), "*A place for thee to dwell in for ever.*" And *Sha'ar* (*gate*) is the name for the threshold with the doorpost as it is; and *pethach* (*door*, lit. *opening*) is the name for that which is left from the gate, from the doors and outwards. And so it is called *pethach*, because it is open continually.

8. **Who is the King of Glory?** as if the gates were asking, *Who is the King of Glory?* And the reply:

The Lord strong and mighty,

The Lord mighty in battle: And he uses these adjectives because the ark used to go out with them in battle, and they were victorious over their enemies by its aid.

9. **Lift up your head, O ye gates:** The repetition is according to the idiom of the language; he repeats the thought with a change of terms. And the learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra wrote that this second verse hints of the return of *the Glory* at the coming of the Redeemer. And he expounds

Yea, lift up, ye everlasting doors—(supplying) your heads, for *your heads*, which he has mentioned, is to be understood again (lit. stands in the place of two), according to the idiom of the language,

that the King of Glory may come in.

10. **Who is the King of Glory?** And in this verse he does not mention *mighty in battle*, and the reason is, according to our interpretation, because after the ark had once rested in the House of Eternity, it should not go out again to battle; therefore the reply is according to the change of meaning.

The Lord of Hosts,

He is the King of Glory. Selah: because He appeared in His glory in the House of Eternity. And so Solomon says (in the verse) (1 Kings viii. 12; 2 Chron. vi. 1): "*The Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness.*" And he says *Lord of Hosts*, because all the *hosts* of Israel were coming into this House and offered sacrifice only in it. And according to the interpretation of the learned Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra, (the Psalmist) mentions *mighty in battle* in the first instance because, while *the Glory* dwelt among Israel, they should dwell in peace and have no war and not fear an enemy, because *the Glory* would

fight for His holy ones. And he does not mention *mighty in battle* in the second instance because of (the passage) (Isaiah ii. 4; Mic. iv. 3) "*and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares*," and the land shall rest from all war. And the reason for *Lord of Hosts* is because the men of the generation shall be as the angels of the Name (*i.e.* God), for the Lord is called so because of the host of heaven.

APPENDIX

SOME HEBREW TERMS (INCLUDING A SELECTION OF GRAMMATICAL TERMS) EMPLOYED BY ḲIMḤI

אויר (ἀήρ) = *air.*
אות (1) *sign* ; (2) *proof* ; (3) *letter* ; pl. אוֹתיוֹת ; אותיות הגרון *gutturals.*
אמצעי = *middle* (see עולם).
אף על פי = *although.*

בוא = (1) *come* ; (2) *be, occur* ; בא עבר תחה עתיד : *the past is* (*here*) *used* (*occurs*) *instead of the future.*
בְּנִדְאי, see ודאי.
בין = *discern* ; Hifil, *understand.*
בינוני ("middle") = (1) *participle* (thus named because it is partly a verb and partly a noun) ; (2) *present tense.*
בנין ("building") = *conjugation* (derivative forms of the verb).

גאוי ("majesty") = *Eminence* or "Gaon," a title given to the chiefs of the Babylonian Rabbinical Colleges in Sura and Pumbeditha, between the sixth and eleventh centuries ; this period of Jewish history is known as the "period of the Geonim." R. Hai was the last of the Geonim (see on Ps. v. 1).
גזר ("cut") ; Nifal, *to be derived.*
גזרה = (*a*) the substance or material out of which something is formed; (*b*) *root* (from which a word is derived) : . . . מגזרת = "of the same origin as."
גלגל = (1) a revolving body ; (2) *sphere.* [For the reckoning of the spheres in Ḳimḥi, see Ps. xix. 7 and note.]
גמרא = *completion, i.e.* the completion or exposition of the Mishnah (in the Talmud).

דבק = *be connected*; (עם) זה הפסוק דבק ל, "this verse is closely connected with."

דָּבָר = (1) *word*; (2) *thing*: שֵׁם דָּבָר = *noun, substantive* (lit. "name of a thing").

דגֵשׁ = "double"; the sign of reduplication, *daghesh*.

דקדק = *to investigate minutely*: Pual, "accurate."

דקדוק = *grammar*.

דֶּרֶךְ = (1) *way*; (2) adv. *in the way of*.

דרשׁ = (1) *search*; (2) *explain*.

דְּרַשׁ = homiletical exposition or Haggadic exegesis (*cf.* also מִדְרָשׁ); it is the opposite of פְּשַׁט.

דעת = (1) *opinion*; עַל דַּעְתִּי, "according to my opinion"; (2) *reason*; שִׁקּוּל הַדַּעַת ("weighing of reason") = reasoning, deliberation, "reasoned judgment" (as opposed to opinions derived from tradition).

הֲוִי (הֲוִי אוֹמֵר, lit. "be saying") = "you must admit," "this proves"; *cf.* xx. 2.

הָנָה = *be pleasant*; Nifal, *to enjoy*.

הפך = (1) *turn*; (2) *transpose*: Hithpael, "to interchange."

הֶפֶךְ = *opposite*.

וִדּוּי = *confession*, esp. of sin.

וַדַּאי m. = *well known, certain, distinct, real*; adv. בְּוַדַּאי = *indeed, surely, in reality*.

וֶשֶׁט = *gullet*: xxii. 16.

זִיו = *splendour, radiance*; זִיו הַשְּׁכִינָה, *the effulgence of the divine presence*.

זכר = (1) *remember*; (2) *mention*: Hifil = *mention*; Nifal = *be mentioned*: הַנִּזְכָּר לְמַעְלָה, "that has been mentioned above."

זָכָר = *male, masculine*; לְשׁוֹן זָכָר, "masculine."

זִכָּרוֹן = *memory*: זִכְרוֹנוֹ לִבְרָכָה (ז"ל), lit. "his memory be for a blessing," *i.e.* "of blessed memory."

זְמַן = (1) *time*; (2) *tense*: [*cf.* in Ibn Ezra זְמַן עוֹמֵד, "present tense" (or "imperfect"), and זְמַן אֶמְצָעִי (or בֵּינוֹנִי), "present tense"]

חִבֵּר (Piel) = (1) *join*; (2) *add together*; (3) *compose, write*: *e.g.* מְחַבֵּר = "author."

חִבּוּר = *conjunction* (*cf.* חבור לי ו, "conjunctive waw" in Ibn Ezra).

חִדֵּשׁ (Piel) = *renew*, or *make new*. [חִדּוּשׁ הָעוֹלָם = "creation" (*ex nihilo*), lit. "making the world new," as opposed to קִדְמוּת הָעוֹלָם = "eternity of matter"]

חזק = *be strong*; also (as adj.) "hard"; חזקים = "tenues" (the letters בגדכפת).

חזר = *to return*.

חטף ("snatch away") = *be short*.

חָטֵף = *short* (of pronunciation): קמץ חטף = "short *ḳameṣ*."

חכם = "wise": pl. חכמים, "the sages"—applied especially to the older authorities of the Talmudical literature.

חכמה, "wisdom"—esp. *science*: חכמת הַטֶּבַע = "physical or natural science"; חכמת התכונה, "science of the disposition" (*sc.* of the stars) = "astronomy"; חכמת התולדות, "physiology" (Ps. xix. 7).

טֶבַע = *nature*.

טִבְעִי (fem. טִבְעִית) = *natural*.

טעם ("taste") = (1) *sense*, *meaning*, *contents*; (2) *reason*; (3) *accent*.

טען ("to bear") = (1) *plead*; (2) *object*.

טענה = "plea," "objection."

טרד = *be weary*, *troubled*, *anxious*: Hiff. *to worry*.

ידיעה ("knowledge") = *determination*; ה"א הידיעה = "the definite article" (ה).

יחיד ("only one," "individual") = *singular*.

יכח ("be straight"): Hif. (1) *to rebuke*; (2) *prove*.

יצא ("go out"); יוצא = *transitive*; פעל יוצא = "transitive verb."

יש = *there is*, *there are*; יש מפרשים, "some explain."

יִשּׁוּב = (1) *habitation*; (2) *the inhabited part* of the world.

ישמעאל = (1) *Ishmael*; (2) *Arab* (Mohammedan).

יָשָׁר = *right*; הַיָּשָׁר = "that which is right," "the right explanation."

כבוד = (1) *honour*; (2) *glory*: הַכָּבוֹד, "the glory," *i.e.* the Divine Glory (= שכינה); כסא הכבוד, "the throne of the Divine Glory"; (3) = *the soul* (Ps. xxx. 13).

כְּבָר = *already*.

כוכב = *star*; כוכבי לכת, "planets"; כוכבים תקועים, "fixed stars" (Ps. xix. 5).

כון: Nif. = *be established*; נכון, "firmly established," "correct": והנכוי, "and the correct explanation is": Piel כִּוֵּן, "intend."

כַּוָּנָה = (1) *intention*; (2) *attention.*

כֹּחַ = (1) *strength, power*; (2) *force*: בכח, "potentially."

כחשׁ = "be false": Hif. "deny," "contradict."

כִּי = (1) *for, because*; (2) *that*: וְכִי, introducing a question to which a negative answer is expected, "is it really the case that . . . ?"

כְּלוּם = *anything, something*: לא כלום, "nothing at all."

כָּלַל = *comprise, include* ("imply").

כְּלָל ("totality") = *general rule, principle*; וְהַכְּלָל = (1) *and the general rule is . . .*; (2) *in short.*

כִּנָּה (Piel) = *surname.*

כִּנּוּי = (1) substitute for proper name; (2) *pronoun.*

כנס = *assemble.*

כְּנֶסֶת = *congregation* (בית הכנסת, "synagogue").

כָּפַל = *double*: כָּפוּל, "doubled."

כֶּפֶל = *doubling.*

לָשׁוֹן = (1) *tongue* (אותיות הלשון, "linguals"); (2) *language*; לְשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ, "the holy language," *i.e.* Hebrew; לשון המקרא, "the language of Holy Writ," *i.e.* Biblical Hebrew; (3) *meaning*; (4) "grammatical form" (or "expression").

מִדָּה = (1) *measure*; (2) *quality* ("attribute"); מדת הדין, "justice" (esp. the divine attribute of justice).

מזל ("station") = *constellation.*

מִין = *species, kind.*

מלא ("be full") = (1) *full*; (2) *plene* (applied to *waw* and *yodh* used as *matres lectionis*).

מִלָּה ("word"); מלת ענין, "significant word" (Ps. iii. 3).

מַמָּשׁ = (1) *palpable*; (2) *in reality.*

מִנְהָג = *custom, rule*; המנהג, "the prevailing custom."

מסר = *deliver, hand down.*

מָסוֹרֶת = *tradition* (esp. with regard to Scripture); בעלי המסורה, the scholars who transmitted the official Hebrew text of the Old Testament Scriptures, together with its vowels, accents, and other signs.

מעלה = (1) *height*; (2) *degree*; (3) *dignity, rank.*

מצא ("find"); נמצא = (1) *found*; (2) *existing, extant*; (3) *present.*
מקום = (1) *place*; (2) *passage* (of a book).
משל ("compare"); מָשָׁל, *comparison, simile*; דרך משל or על דרך משל, "figuratively."

נָח = (1) *resting*; (2) *silent, quiescent.*
נָע = *mobile*; שוא נע, "Sh^{e}wa mobile."
נפל ("fall") = *apply* (*to*).
נקבה = *feminine.*
נקודה = *point* (נקוד, "punctuation").
נְשָׁמָה = *soul*; נשמה השליכה, "intellect."
נָתַר, in Hif. הִתִּיר = (1) *untie*; (2) *permit*: מוּתָּר = "permitted (opp. to אָסוּר, "forbidden").

סִבָּה = *cause.*
סבר = *think, suppose.*
סֵדֶר, סִדְרָא = *portion, section.*
סוף = *end*; סוף פסוק = (1) "end of the verse"; (2) the accent placed at the last word of a verse.
סימן = *sign, determination.*
סכם, Hif. הסכים = *agree*; הַסְכָּמָה, *agreement.*
סָמַךְ = (1) *support*; (2) *join to*; Nifal נסמך, "be joined," "in the construct state."
סמיכה / סמיכות = *construct state.*
ספק = *doubt*; בלי ספק, "doubtless"; בספק, "doubtful."
ספרד = *Spain.*

עבר = *past tense, preterite.*
עגול = *circle.*
עלם = (1) *hide*; (2) *omit*; נעלם, "elided."
עוֹלָם = *world*; עולם הזה, "this world"; עולם הבא, "the world to come.
עמד = (1) *stand*; (2) *to last*; עוֹמֵד, "intransitive"; זמן עומד, "present tense."
עִנְיָן = (1) *subject-matter, context*; (2) the logical connexion of words.
עֶצֶם = (1) *bone*; (2) *substance*; (3) *individual*; בעצמו, "in person," "himself"; שֵׁם עצם, "substantive."

עִקָּר = (1) *root, origin*; (2) *radical.*
עָתִיד = *future, future tense*; לֶעָתִיד, "in time to come."

פֶּה = *mouth*; תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה, "Oral Law."
פָּסַק = *leave off, pause.*
פָּסוּק = *verse*; סוֹף פָּסוּק, see סוֹף.
פֹּעַל, *make*; פֹּעַל or פּוֹעַל = (1) *action*; (2) *verb*; פ"א הפּוֹעל, "the first radical" (of the verb).
עי"ן הפּוֹעל, "the second radical" (of the verb); למ"ד הפּוֹעל, "the third radical" (of the verb).
פַּרְהֶסְיָא (*παῤῥησία, free speech, frankness*) = *openness*; בְּפַרְהֶסְיָא, "in public."
פָּרַשׁ (Piel) = *explain, expound*; מְפָרְשִׁים, "commentators."
פֵּירוּשׁ = "explanation" (הֶפְרֵשׁ = "distinction").
פָּרָשָׁה (pl. פָּרָשִׁיּוֹת) = *section* or *paragraph* of the Bible.
פְּשָׁט = *plainness, simplicity*; applied technically to that method of Biblical exposition which is based on the plain and grammatical sense, as opposed to דְּרַשׁ, the Midrashic exegesis. See Introduction.

צִוּוּי = *imperative.*
צַחוּת = *purity, elegance*; דֶּרֶךְ צַחוּת, "poetically," "eleganter."
צוֹרֶךְ = *necessity*; אֵין צוֹרֶךְ, "it is needless."

קַבָּלָה = *tradition.*
קַל = *light*; הַבִּנְיָן הַקַּל (or קל alone) = the first conjugation of the Hebrew verb.
קָמַץ = *to close*; קָמֶץ, the name of a vowel (*ḳameṣ*).
קָצַר = *short*; דֶּרֶךְ קִצְרָה, "elliptically."
קָרוֹב = (1) *near*; (2) *probable.*
קָשֶׁה = *hard, difficult.*

רְאָיָה = *proof.*
רֵאשִׁית = *Beginning*; בְּרֵאשִׁית = (1) *Genesis* (first Book of the Pentateuch, so called from its opening word); (2) *creation*; מַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית, "work of creation."

רב = (1) *teacher*; (2) also prefixed as a title to scholars learned in the Talmud, whereas חכם is given to men who are distinguished in other branches of science and literature; רבינו = "our teacher"; רבותינו זכרם לברכה, "our teachers of blessed memory"; (3) רַבִּים (pl.) = *many*; שם על רבים, "collective noun."

רוֹב = *majority.*

רִבּוּי = (1) *amplification* or *extension of a term*; (2) *plural.*

רגש = *to move*; הַרְגָּשָׁה = *sense, feeling* (חָמֵשׁ הַרְגָּשׁוֹת, "the five senses," Ibn Ezra).

רָחוֹק = (1) *distant*; (2) *improbable, far-fetched.*

רכב, Hif. = (1) *cause to ride*; (2) *combine*; מורכב = "compound."

רֶמֶז = (1) *hint*; (2) *allusion.*

רָפֶה = (1) *weak*; (2) *soft* (a letter without *daghesh forte*); (3) *aspirated.*

רְשׁוּת = (1) *permission*; (2) *dominion, authority.*

שֶׁבַח = *praise, laudation.*

שִׁבּוּשׁ = (1) *mistake*; (2) *corruption.*

שְׁכִינָה = *the presence* (of the Divine Glory) (lit. "the dwelling").

שָׁלֵם = *be perfect, full.*

שֵׁם = (1) *name*; (2) *noun*; הַשֵּׁם, *the Name* (*i.e.* of God); שם דבר = "substantive"; שם עצם = "proper name"; שם על רבים, "collective noun."

על שם ... (prep.) = "because of."

שמע = *to hear, understand*; מִשְׁמָע = "understanding," "meaning"; כמשמעו = "according to its literal meaning."

שנה = *be different*: Hithpael = *to change*; Piel = *change*; Pual = *be changed.*

שִׁנּוּי = (1) *difference, distinction*; (2) *change.*

שקל = *to weigh*; משקל = (1) *weight*; (2) *form paradigm.*

שִׁקּוּל = *weighing*; שִׁקּוּל הדעת, "weighing by the mind," *i.e.* reasoning.

שֹׁרֶשׁ = (1) *root*; (2) *radical.*

תוֹאַר = *qualify*; שֵׁם תואר (or תואר alone) = "adjective"; תואר לנקבה, "fem. adjective" (Ps. v. 16); שם תואר יוצא, "transitive adjective"; המתואר (lit. "that which is qualified") = "substantive."

תכן = *weigh*; Nifal = (1) *be weighed*; (2) ***be right, possible***; לֹא יָתָכֵן, "it is not admissible"; מִתְכּוֹנֶת = (1) "form"; (2) "properties."

תלה = *hang*, *depend*; תָּלוּי, "dependent (on)."

תָּמַהּ = *be surprised*; ואל תתמה, "be not surprised."

תימה = *surprise*; ה״א התימה, "the interrogative *he*"; בתימה = "interrogatively."

תנאי = *condition*, *stipulation*.

תְּנוּעָה = *vowel* (lit. "motion," "movement").

תקופה = (1) *circuit*; (2) esp. *the turn of the sun*, *solstice*; *e.g.* ניסן ת״, "vernal equinox"; תמוז ת״, "summer solstice"; תשרי ת״, "autumnal equinox"; טבת ת״, "winter solstice."

תִּקֵּן (Piel) = *set in order*, *adapt*.

תרגם = *translate*.

תרגום = *Targum*, name given to Aramaic translations of the Old Testament.

תשובה = (1) *return*; (2) *repentance*; (3) *reply*.

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